

PAFRAS NEWSLETTER

www.pafras.org.uk • info@pafras.org.uk • 0113 262 2163

Autumn 2016 – Issue 41



News...from the Operations Manager's desk....

Summer has been a really busy time for the PAFRAS team with our big news being the office move. We're thrilled with the new space which as well as having a staff office also has a lovely bright client area with two interview rooms and additional space for our Food Room which, after years at Ashton Road Industrial site, has finally joined the rest of PAFRAS under one roof. Our amazing volunteer team really pulled out all of the stops to help keep things covered during the move and a special thanks to Tagee and Sip who went above and beyond to help us move across the Food Room. We're now based in Unity Business Centre on Roundhay Road, see below for further details and please look out for details of our office launch.

Our new Big Lottery - Help Through Crisis project started over Summer too. We feel really lucky to have been able to employ, Alexandra, as a new Destitution Caseworker to work alongside Laurie and Jullianne to provide support, advice and advocacy for asylum seekers and refugees facing destitution. We have also welcomed Sanjeev our new Mental Health Assessment Worker into the team and Snezhana our Finance Officer.

Thank you to all of the groups who have hosted a talk from PAFRAS over the last few months including Yorkshire St.Pauli, Wesley Guild and Sinai Synagogue. I very much enjoy getting out to meet groups to explore current issues in the Asylum and Refugee sector and to provide an update on PAFRAS. I often get asked about Richmond Hill Recreation Centre open times for clothing donations. Please keep a look out over the next couple of months for an update on this. Alex, our Drop-In Logistics Officer, is now working in partnership with Leeds Refugee Forum to open this up at certain points throughout the week.

PAFRAS founder Christine Majid honoured at National Diversity Awards!



Here are some lovely photos of Christine and her family at the National Diversity Awards ceremony. Christine was nominated for an award and was one of 6 finalists shortlisted from over 20,000 applications.

Asylum support changes loom

We continue to be very worried about the changes to asylum support that are planned to be introduced in the Immigration Act next year, these changes will see support removed for some families and young asylum seeking care leavers from as young as eighteen. We're working hard to look at how our service can meet the growing need for destitution support and be tailored to the specific needs of families and young people. PAFRAS also contributed to the evidence submitted by Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Asylum Activism Project to the All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry on the hardship faced by refugees at the point their asylum support ends.

We are regularly seeing refugees in the drop-in who have moved out of Home Office support and accommodation but have been unable to navigate their way through the complex and bureaucratic mainstream services in order to access housing and benefits before homelessness hits and a need to rely on food parcels.

Ruth Davany

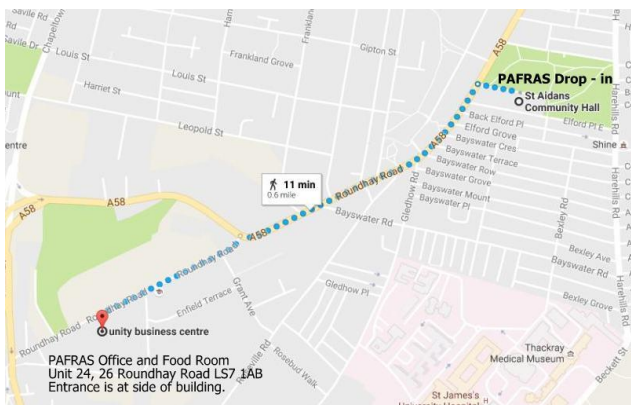
PAFRAS

Office and Food Room have moved!

To Unit 24, Unity Business Centre
26 Roundhay Road
Leeds LS7 1AB

Telephone number remains the same: 0113 2622163

Food Room is open to receive food and toiletry donations on
Mondays 10 - 1200 hrs or bring them to Drop-in at St.Aidan's Church
Wednesday 10 – 1300hrs.



Some numbers - so far this year at the Drop-in :

Visits	4,494
New and Destitute	236
Asylum seekers	2,429
No support	2,476
Advice sessions	1,553
Meals	4,564
Food parcels	2,500



Focus on PAFRAS Supporters

Yorkshire St Pauli – Football for all!

FC St. Pauli are a German second division football team, who are more notable for their actions off the pitch than those on it. The club has a strong and non-negotiable stance on discrimination. Everyone is equal.

The Leeds based club, Yorkshire St. Pauli, actively promotes this anti-discrimination message by not only echoing the sentiment but actively working within the community to help promote it. In the past couple of years they have worked closely with PAFRAS to provide not only financial support through our membership but also by welcoming our service users into their group.

Having established a connection with some of our service users and welcoming them to their meetings to watch St. Pauli matches with them, they noticed that many of them were keen to be able to play football, but lacked kit and facilities in order to do so. In 2013 they set about trying to find a way to provide this. The idea was to get a local 5-a-side pitch, ask their members to come along and play and cover the cost of the pitch hire between us in order to then allow PAFRAS service users to play for free. The manager at Powerleague Leeds Central was really enthusiastic about what we were trying to achieve and was happy to offer us a generous discount.

The other aspect of the project was being able to provide equipment for the Refugees and Asylum Seekers to use. 'We had to ensure that we could provide for everyone who turned up with everything they would need – boots, shirts, shorts, socks, shinpads. Not to mention footballs and water bottles. Thankfully, through our members and followers on social media we collected donations in order to raise enough money for this, and the club also sent us some kit to add to our collection. Our kit bag is now a colourful collection of football shirts from around the globe! As well as this, our members also provide transport to and from areas of Leeds in order to allow people without access to transport to attend.'



Almost two years on, and the 'Football For All' project as it has become known is going from strength to strength. 'Our aim isn't to win any trophies, it's simply to have a kickabout in a friendly and uncompetitive environment that is welcoming and accessible to anyone. It's also vital that the environment is both safe and inclusive. The project is well attended by our members, by PAFRAS service users, and other members of the general public who have heard about it on social media or through word of mouth and who have come down and joined in. It's a real community affair, which is open to all and provides much more than simply a friendly kickabout of a football.'

The 'Football For All' kickabout takes place at Lucozade Powerleague Leeds Central on Wellington Bridge Street, Leeds [just off Kirkstall Road by Staples] every Sunday at 12pm. Everyone is welcome.

'But we want to continue to do more. Following consultation with PAFRAS on how we could help, we have established the **Yorkshire St. Pauli Kitchen Fund**'.

A huge thank you to all!

Pop up choir raises money for PAFRAS



Beccy Owen is a musician / songwriter from Bradford who with a friend decided to write an anthem suitable for the Refugee Olympic Team seeing they had no national anthem. They wrote it, crowd sourced a pop up choir of over 100 singers at All Hallows Church, taught, practiced, recorded and filmed it all on one evening in August! Money and food donations were generously given on the night and the result is available to download. [pay as you feel] over 80 downloads to date! at <https://beccyowen.bandcamp.com/track/the-world-is-our-song-anthem-for-team-refugees-unofficial>. It was also featured on Radio Leeds the next morning. Amazing! Thank you Beccy and Co.

Tour de Touchstone Fund Raising Day....Rio's Revenge!



Touchstone Community Support Team held their annual fund raising event for PAFRAS in July. This year they had an Olympics theme. So... the Tour de bit involved moving around between their different offices over the course of the day, each site hosting a different 'Olympic' event! Contestants were sponsored by friends, family and colleagues. The events included fancy dress table football, limbo dancing and throwing wet sponges at each other while confined to the stocks, as a peer support exercise!