

PAFRAS NEWSLETTER



Positive
Action
For
Refugees &
Asylum
Seekers

Newsletter 9

NOT MOVING ON: Still destitute in Leeds

In July the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) published a report, written by Dave Brown, entitled 'More Destitution in Leeds'. This report was based on a survey of key agencies in Leeds working with destitute asylum seekers and followed up on similar research conducted in 2007 (also published by the JRCT).

As in the research carried out in 2007; over a one month period the agencies involved (PAFRAS, Refugee Council, East Leeds Health for All, St. Vincents Support Centre, and the Health Access Team) monitored the number of times that 'service users' were accessing projects, and the reasons for destitution. The results indicated that the number of people destitute in Leeds has increased 180% since eighteen months previously and 331 individuals destitute asylum seekers and refugees were surveyed. Whilst the exact number of people destitute through the asylum and

immigration system in Leeds is unknown, some estimates have suggested that there are over 3,000 people.

A selection of key findings of the research were that:

- More children are being forced into destitution;
- More elderly people are being forced into destitution;
- The number of people who are experiencing long term destitution is increasing;
- Since 2007 there has been a rise in incidences of rough sleeping;
- And asylum policy is increasing the number of people being made destitute.

Of the agencies surveyed, four of the five recorded an increase in visits from 'service users'. Like in 2007, PAFRAS received the highest total of visits. To download a copy of the report visit <http://www.jrct.org.uk>

July - August 2008

'The feeding of the 5,000'

On 4 August the Yorkshire Evening Post featured an article, written by Pete Lazenby, focusing on PAFRAS.

The article looked at the work that PAFRAS carries out, and centred in particular on a specific PAFRAS 'service user' – John Apollo – and his experiences in the UK. The article further emphasised the fact that PAFRAS urgently requires food and toiletries, and appealed for donations from readers. The response to this appeal has been overwhelming, and we would like to thank those who have contacted us to offer their support and assistance. Many people gave us their thoughts on the article when contacting us and a small selection of these quotes are reproduced here:

- I read the article in the Yorkshire Evening Post and was enraged. I am on DLA myself, currently looking for work but I would like to make a regular contribution of sanitary products as the thought that women may be without them is so humiliating and deeply moved me.*
- I don't have lots of money to donate, so I would hope that my physical help, and clothing donations could help, as well as some donations of food, as and when I can.*
- I am an ordinary middle-aged, working woman. I think it is wicked the way this Government is treating asylum seekers and refugees. I don't have a lot of money but I would like to make a small donation to your valuable work.*

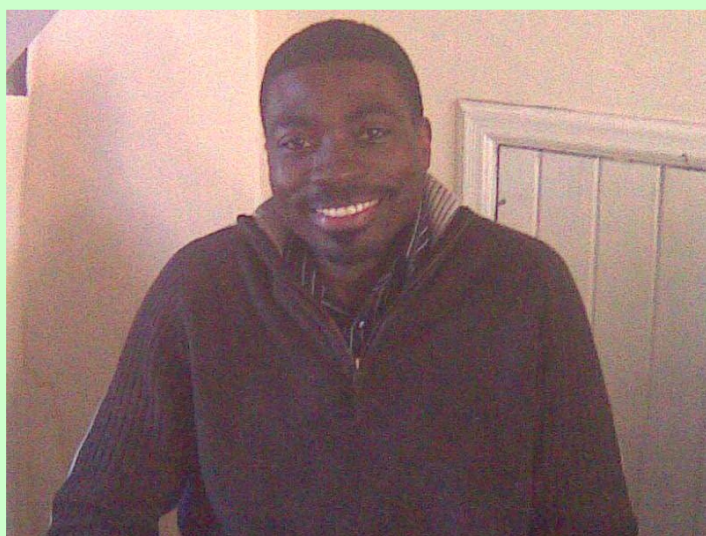
Again, we would like to sincerely thank all of the people who have contacted us after reading this article. To read a copy of the 'The feeding of the 5,000' see <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/features/The-feeding-of-the-5000.4354463.jp>

Fidelis Chebe – an update on the PAFRAS 'Healthy Living Project'

Since the beginning of 2008 PAFRAS has been pursuing a programme of activities aimed at reducing isolation, and improving the well-being of PAFRAS 'service users'. Fidelis Chebe – coordinator of these projects – took time to briefly discuss to PAFRAS how the project has gone so far. As he explained:

'The general aim of the Healthy Living Project has been to improve the health and well being of destitute asylum seekers by providing a range of services and forms of support. Because destitution impacts severely on people's mental and physical health we have provided a series of activities that address these concerns. So for example we have been looking at things like swimming lessons, art orientated activities, stop smoking support, sexual health advice, walks, advice on substance usage and sessional workers doing complimentary therapy. We have also organised specialist counselling as the service users have experienced traumatic situations

It's important to recognise that many of these activities are things that destitute asylum seekers may not ordinarily be able to access.



PAFRAS accommodates people who have been almost completely shut out from mainstream service provision and we try and counter that. Ultimately, the test of how effective we have been is how the service users think the project has gone and the feedback has been really positive. We have been able to ensure that people have been able to travel to health appointments; we have developed people's skills and talents; and the healthy living project has coalesced with our ongoing case work.

Our case work brings to light a number of issues about how inequalities are embedded and the problems faced by destitute asylum seekers. One of the effects of destitution policies is that they erode people's sense of self worth; we try and restore that'.

Profit and power: the privatisation of asylum control

The control and administration of those seeking asylum is increasingly integrated within the dictates of the private sector. From surveillance to housing, the existence and presence of asylum seekers present opportunities for those who wish to profit from such movement. The implications of privatising this control are relatively un-researched, and under-explored, and in July 2008 Corporate Watch featured an article, written by PAFRAS Information and Communications Officer Jon Burnett, on this subject. To read this article visit <http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3091>

Work, risk and undocumented workers in the North of England

As mentioned in our previous newsletter PAFRAS, in conjunction with the University of Liverpool, are carrying out research for a short report on the risks faced by undocumented workers in the UK.

A report based on this research will be published later this year; and it is envisioned that the findings will be launched at a one day event.

For more information on this research, or its launch, please contact Jon Burnett on 0113 2484147 or at pafrasemail@yahoo.co.uk

PAFRAS at Hyde Park Unity Day

Hyde Park Unity Day, in Leeds 6, has been running since 1995 after a local pub was lost through rioting. It was instigated by the Hyde Park Residents Association with a mission to: 'Create a relaxed friendly and safe environment. Unite the community and provide an opportunity to highlight the positive aspects of living, working, and studying in Hyde Park. Demonstrate communities' strength through voluntary involvement,...



...celebrate cultural diversity through art, music and performance. Create a focus point for community activities. Unite and provide opportunities to showcase skills, talent and nature of local people and artists. Unity Day is an opportunity for anyone or group to show their creative flair.'

This year a number of PAFRAS 'service users' formed a band and played at Unity Day. The event was hugely successful and popular (see photos), and we would like to thank 'Stop Hate UK' – especially Tim Dawtry – for their work in instigating this initiative.

A Yorkshire Calendar for 2009

St. Chad's Church in Leeds has compiled a calendar of photographs of Yorkshire, available for sale in aid of PAFRAS. The calendar is A4 size with one page and a seasonal picture for each month.

All profits will go to PAFRAS.

The calendars are only **£5 each** (plus p&p) so why not buy several to send to your friends?

Prices (including post & envelopes) are as follows:

1 copy: £6

2 copies: £11.25

3 copies: £16.25

4 or more copies: £5 each (post free)

Orders (with cheque payable to Roger Davis, please) should be sent to Roger Davis, 30 Wynford Rise, Leeds LS16 6HX (tel. 0113 2678016).

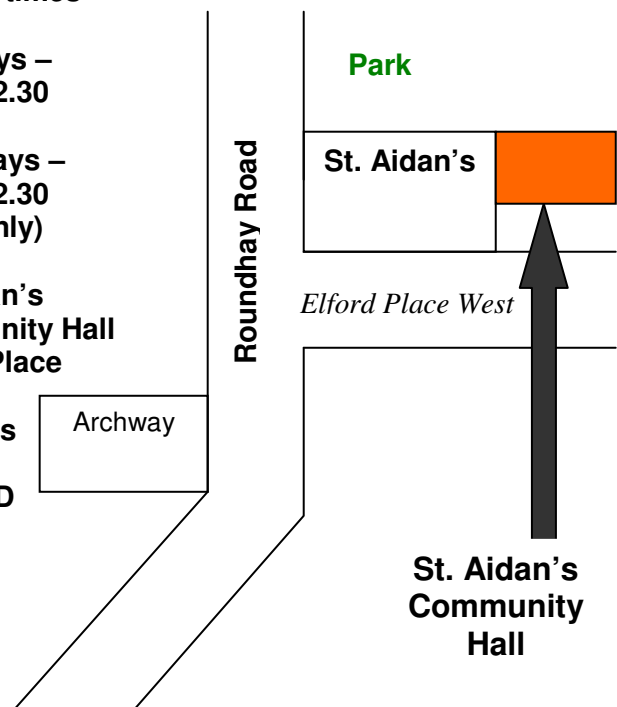
PAFRAS drop-in details

Drop-in times

Tuesdays – 10.30-12.30

Thursdays – 10.30-12.30 (food only)

**St. Aidan's Community Hall
Elford Place West
Harehills
Leeds
LS8 5QD**



Patricia Jakeways

In July, Patricia Jakeways, a volunteer with PAFRAS, sadly passed on. Patricia's first moved to Leeds in the 1960s with her family and worked with children with cerebral palsy. Following this, she taught English to Chilean refugees: enabling her to develop a passion for working with those needing asylum that she would return to whilst at PAFRAS. Between these times her work was dedicated to social justice; and Patricia worked as part of the Chaplaincy team at Armley Prison, taught adults with learning disabilities, and trained as an independent councillor.

Patricia was especially popular with all at PAFRAS. She was a very special person. She was generous and encouraging, and will be sadly missed.

Thank you

PAFRAS would not be able to run without with the ongoing support of a variety of organisations, faith groups, and individuals. In July and August we received a considerable amount of food from St. Georges Crypt, and we would like to thank them for their crucial assistance. We would also especially like to thank the Hamara Centre for their donations. Volunteers are vital at PAFRAS, and we would like to offer our continued gratitude for their work and energy.

Due to current circumstances, we are in particular need of cash donations at the moment. You can now make a donation by debit/credit card on our website. Your donation can go further with the online gift aid function, with the inland revenue giving us an extra 28p for every pound you donate. Please go to www.pafRAS.org.uk and click on 'Making a Donation'.

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