

PAFRAS NEWSLETTER

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Positive
Action
For
Refugees &
Asylum
Seekers

Issue 20

November - December 2010

The Wages of Fear
New report on
undocumented work

**Celebrating Christmas,
and our Volunteers**

Where now for Justice?
New PAFRAS Briefing Paper

**Imprisoned
and exploited**
the immigration detainees
who work for next to nothing

**Volunteer Electrician
Needed**

Appeal for donations

THE WAGES OF FEAR: RISK, SAFETY AND UNDOCUMENTED WORK



A new report published by PAFRAS and the University of Liverpool

The Wages of Fear: risk, safety and undocumented work explores the experiences of undocumented workers in the UK. It investigates the occupational risks facing undocumented workers, and finds evidence of routine exploitation, injury, and harm. It further provides a snapshot of the violent consequences of increased workplace raids. The Wages of Fear can be downloaded from our website.

Positive Action For Refugees & Asylum Seekers
Company No. 5751987 • Registered Charity No. 1120950
Units 13-14, Chapeltown Enterprise Centre, 231-235 Chapeltown Road, Leeds, LS7 2DX

Celebrating Christmas, and our Volunteers



PAFRAS volunteers and staff line up for the obligatory group photo at our Christmas party.

Volunteers with PAFRAS have been at the forefront of caring for and assisting destitute asylum seekers for the last six years. I would like personally to publicly thank all the volunteers past and present who have contributed their time, energy and skills with such dedication to those suffering homelessness, hunger, disadvantage, isolation and abject poverty.

PAFRAS has gone through a period of change and expansion but our clarity of vision and purpose remains undiminished. Our volunteers have brought a diversity of skills and experience along with links with the community, and service opportunities with them and we are very grateful for that.

There are over 600 visits a month to the PAFRAS drop in centre. Our volunteers make up over 320 Food parcels a month at our food base at Ashton Road and prepare the 500 plus hot meals that are provided on site every month. They also play other crucial roles at the drop-in, ranging from administrative duties to the befriending and supporting of clients.

With the continuous support of so many within the community, churches, faith groups and Individual donors who arrive every week with food, clothing and toiletries, we have been able to keep our doors open for the last six years which is a tremendous achievement. Without you we could not have sustained the level of support to our clients.

On behalf of PAFRAS, and the Board of Trustees, I would like to take this opportunity to convey all our sincere, warmest appreciation and gratitude to all of our volunteers and donors. Your commitment, dedication and tireless levels of energy make a significant difference to people's lives and make PAFRAS a place of welcome and hope.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Majid".

Christine Kay Majid

Volunteer Electrician Needed

We are looking for a qualified electrician to undertake a small amount of work for us. We have ten sewing machines are urgently require safety checking before they can be used by our service users. If you're able to offer us some time to check some or all of these machines we'd very much like to hear form you.

Volunteer Driver Needed

We are also looking for a driver able to transport food parcels from our food store on Ashton Road Industrial Estate two minutes down the road to the St Aidan's drop-in. You'll need to work closely and co-ordinate with the staff and volunteers at the drop-in and in the kitchen. You will need to be available one or two mornings a week, to start at Ashton Road Industrial Estate at 9 am.

New PAFRAS Briefing: *Where Now For Justice?*

November 15 marked the beginning of a new three-year Standard Civil Contract for Legal Aid provision in England and Wales. The tender process for this contract, which closed on 28 January 2010, was plagued by controversy around the Legal Services Commission's declared intention of greatly reducing the number of providers delivering legal aid work and by critical flaws in the selection criteria used. This latter controversy recently culminated in a High Court victory for the Law Society, when the court ruled the family-law tendering process had been unlawful, cancelled its result and ordered the LSC pay them £300,000 in costs.

On November 8, a similar case brought by South Manchester Law Centre won the right to proceed with a Judicial Review against the tendering process for asylum and immigration. The Judicial Review will be heard in January 2011.

PAFRAS's fourteenth briefing paper *Where Now For Justice* takes a critical look at legal aid provision in West Yorkshire and more widely and explores the implications of the new contract for access to justice. The briefing paper can be downloaded from our [website](#).

Meeting

The Health & Well-being of Asylum Seekers, from Country of Origin to Asylum or Detention

Young people suffer trauma and loss at every stage of their often long and dangerous journey. Their emotional and physical scars are deep and painful and need time, understanding and sensitivity to 'unpack'. The evening's presenter, Emma Fillmore, recognises, treats and manages the health factors that affect young people from their country of origin on their journey and on arrival in this country, and will share some of their issues with delegates.

This meeting is hosted by the [Association for Child and Adult Mental Health](#) and is in London.

6.30pm - 7.45-8.00pm
Wednesday 9 February 2011

Cost: £10/£20 ACAMH Member/Non-Member,
The meeting is open to all.

To book contact Martin Pratt on 020 7403 7458,
martin.pratt@acamh.org.uk

Imprisoned and exploited: the immigration detainees who work for next to nothing.

A report in the Guardian in 2 January highlights the links between wage exploitation of undocumented workers and the state. The report by Karen McVeigh shows how detainees at the privately run Yarl's Wood detention centre are paid as little as 50p per hour to perform menial tasks.

Serco, the detention centre's operators **reported** pre-tax profits of £115.6m for the half year to June 2010. The company has a vast array of commercial interests aside from asylum detention, including defence, transport, and education (it has a 10 year contract with Bradford City Council to operate the local education authority).

Immigration legislation already allows government contractors to exploit their prisoners by exempting them from the national minimum wage. The UKBA's guidance to contractors recommends a minimum wage of a little as £1 per hour for routine work and £1.25 for 'special projects', such as painting their cells.

Apparently this is too much for Serco who, according to the report, pay detainee Gloria Sestus a flat rate of £1 per day for the cleaning of the dining room twice daily. A task that she says frequently takes more than an hour each time.

Sestus, interviewed by McVeigh said "It's really humiliating. It is like slavery in a modernised form. It doesn't allow you to buy much, just a £5 phone card for a week's work and maybe some noodles from the shop."

Read the full article [Yarl's Wood detainees 'paid 50p an hour'](#) on the Guardian online.

About the Presenter

Emma is a paediatrician in Nottingham with specialist training and responsibility for the health needs of children in care. As the designated doctor for children in care and safeguarding she has a role in the strategic and operational development of services as well as a clinical role for the 700 children in care in Nottingham City. Seeing children for all health issues and particularly dealing with young unaccompanied asylum seekers assessing their complex physical and emotional needs, she works within a team of specialist nurses and doctors who have developed a clinic along with social care to provide the best possible service for young people to meet their needs.

ACAMH Head Office, St Saviours House, 39/41 Union Street, London SE1 1SD

Getting Involved

Since opening the door of our drop-in in 2005 we have had steadily increasing number of destitute refugees and asylum seekers come through it. Thanks to you, our supporters, we are able to rise to the of challenge providing food and clothing, advice and support for them.

The nature of the problem of destitution in Leeds means that we are always on the look out for new ways of supporting the service that we provide, and of course we also need your help. We welcome contributions to our service in many different ways from volunteering, to donating food, toiletries, clothing and other items to making a financial donation. For the service we provide it really is a case of every little helps and no contribution is too small (or too large!).

Maybe there's some challenge you've always wanted to rise to and getting yourself sponsored to do it for PAFRAS would help clinch the deal? Perhaps you'd prefer organising an event, concert or skills auction. Or maybe you're a talented knitter and you'd like to knit a scarf, hat or jumper for one of our service users. Whatever your idea we would love to hear from you and will endeavour to support it in any way we can. You can get in touch by calling 0113 262 2163 or emailing info@pafras.org.uk

Donations

Tins:

Tomatoes, spaghetti, vegetables, fruit, fish, meat (ideally not pork), vegetables and beans.

Dry food:

Sugar, tea, rice, pasta, cereal (these are split down into portions, so catering size bags are useful), small jars of coffee.

Sweets:

Chocolate bars and chocolate biscuits.

We also need:

Long-life milk, fruit juices, biscuits, nuts, and dried fruit.

Toiletries and babies' things:

Shampoo and shower gel (small bottles), soap, mouth wash, sanitary towels, toothpaste, tooth brushes, (safety) razor blades, shaving foam/gel, deodorant, toilet rolls, disposable nappies, wipes, etc.

Alternatively, PAFRAS accepts financial donations. These are especially useful as they can go to meet all kinds of needs; including money for bus tickets to attend Home Office appointments (see issue 17).

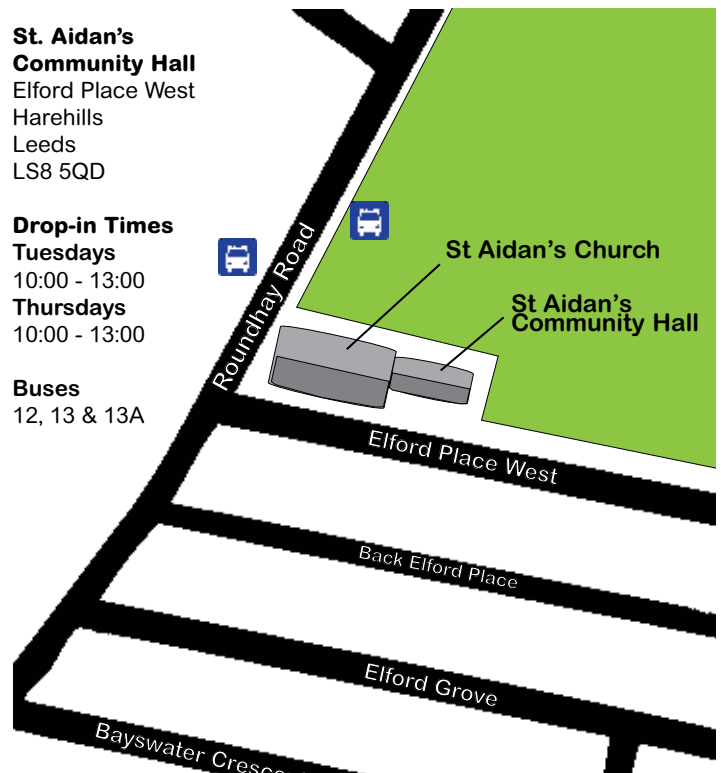
If you would prefer to donate money you can do so easily by completing the standing order form that comes with this newsletter or by following the instructions on our website.

If you are going to donate money, please don't forget to complete a Gift Aid form. Gift Aid means that for every £1 you donate the Inland Revenue will give us an additional 28 pence.

If there is no standing order or gift aid form with your newsletter you can request one by telephoning us or emailing info@pafras.org.uk. You can also download one from our website:

www.pafras.org.uk

If you have any queries please get in touch with us by telephone. If you can help distribute food appeals then please contact us and we will send you leaflets and appeals.



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

Drop-in Times
Tuesdays
10:00 - 13:00
Thursdays
10:00 - 13:00

Buses
12, 13 & 13A