

PAFRAS NEWSLETTER

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Positive
Action
For
Refugees &
Asylum
Seekers



Issue 22
March - April 2011

ESOL Provision Under Threat

In a heavily trailed and widely reported speech on immigration delivered to Tory party faithful in Hampshire last month David Cameron followed-up his previous rejection of 'state' multiculturalism with a call for the integration of migrants.

However, for all of the Prime Minister's concern over "a kind of discomfort and disjointedness" in communities generated (he says) by migrants who are unable to speak English, the government have made few if any positive proposals to tackle the 'problem'.

Indeed, according to the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) government proposals to further restrict free access to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses will mean that large numbers of poor, marginalised and especially women, migrants will no longer qualify for the English language education they desperately need if they and their children are to improve their prospects and participate fully in local and national cultural, social and political life.

The current proposals come on the heels of swinging cuts to ESOL funding over the last four years, which have seen the number of adults taking ESOL courses drop by an estimated 40,000, and threaten half of the remaining 183,000 places. The proposals include:

- Limiting public funding to people from 'settled communities';
- Limiting full fee remission to people claiming Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) or the new Employment Support Allowance (ESA);
- Removing full fee remission from people on a range of other benefits, including Working Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Council Tax and Pension Credits;
- Ending funding for ESOL in the workplace.

These plans will mean that asylum applicants and refused asylum seekers whom the Home Office recognises are unable to return home will no longer qualify for free classes. What is more many women supporting families (usually in receipt of Income Support of £65/week) and very poor pensioners will also no longer qualify for free lessons. Without free lessons their chances of learning are slim to none. How would they afford the cost of tuition at £800 - £1000 a year?

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ESOL Provision Under Threat

Lindholme Detention Centre Criticised

New report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons finds fault with systems and processes at South Yorkshire Detention Centre

Bandiera Rossa host fundraising Ceilidh for PAFRAS

Saturday 21 May

Mission Accomplished

Jim Rowland's fundraising half-marathon for PAFRAS

Volunteers Needed

Donations and drop-in information

Lindholme Immigration Removal Centre strongly criticised following unannounced inspection

Last week the Chief Inspector of Prisons published a follow-up report on conditions at Lindholme Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), near Doncaster. The report, based on the findings of an unannounced inspection in January of this year, sounded some positive notes in its findings, particularly in relation to staff attitudes, but raised a number of important and worrying criticisms also. Defenders of the IRC's record have pointed to the present economic climate in defence against the findings that "the general quality of the accommodation remain[s] poor".

"Detainees told us that they had been used to act as interpreters, sometimes when sensitive information was being communicated"

Nonetheless many of the most worrying criticisms made in the report do not relate to the physical condition of the estate and would not require significant expenditures to rectify. To give

the Prison Service its due, a number of trenchant criticisms levelled in the report implicate the UKBA, the firm contracted to escort detainees and the Legal Services Commission.

The Inspectorate made criticisms of the Immigration Removal Centre that covered numerous areas, but, from the perspective of PAFRAS, four specific areas of concern, all of which relate to detainee human rights, stand out.

"A basic first night assessment and room sharing risk assessment were undertaken in reception, including questions about previous offending behaviour, emotional well-being and risk of self-harm or suicide."

PAFRAS is extremely concerned that vulnerable asylum seekers who have fled torture and persecution in their home countries should be imprisoned at all in the UK. We are especially worried that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons' findings that there are serious failings at Lindholme in implementing procedures relating to the well-being of victims of torture and others who are especially vulnerable and liable to be seriously harmed by the experience of detention (i.e. Rule 35).

While evidence of the UKBA's failure to respond to Rule 35 Reports in a timely and reasoned fashion are, as always shocking, they do not come

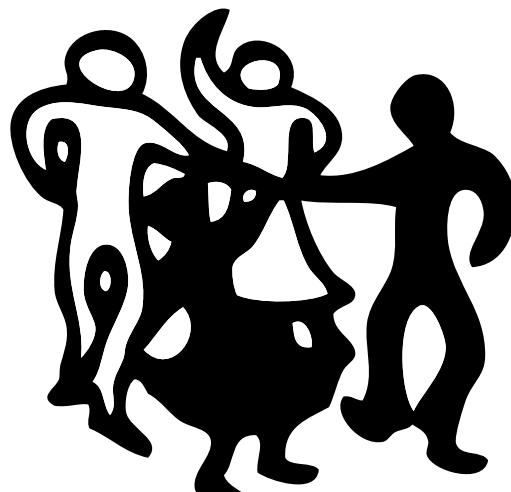
as a great surprise, given our knowledge of the experiences of asylum applicants when dealing with the UKBA more generally.

The failure of both detention centre and UKBA staff to ensure detainees' privacy and full understanding of important and sensitive information imparted by them (by conducting interviews and briefings in private and through the use of professional interpreting services) is nothing short of shocking.

For full details visit the news section of our [web-site](#) or read the *Inspectorate's full report* [here](#).

to celebrate 20 years of music for dancing
Bandiera Rossa present:

A Grand Ceilidh in aid of PAFRAS



**featuring live music by
BANDIERA ROSSA!**

All are welcome,
No previous experience is necessary,
And a splendid time for all is guaranteed!

Saturday 21st May

**7:30 pm to 11:00 pm
St Chad's Otley Road, Headingley**

**Adults £8 (unwaged, £5), children £4
family of four £18**

please bring some food to share!

For more information call
Tricia 0113 247 6037 or
Martin 0117 278 1712

CHARLES PECK: A Different Place

@ Dean Clough, Halifax
11th June to 2nd October 2011



Good news for anyone who missed 'Another Place' a retrospective exhibition of the photography of Charles Peck, which was advertised in the last issue of our newsletter.

Dean Clough in Halifax will be showing more of Charles's work from Saturday 11 June (admission free).

Charles, who died in 2009, felt very strongly about the injustices faced by asylum seekers and the need to support them. In memory of this Charles's brother Tim, who has been the force behind this and the previous exhibition, is donating any profits from the exhibition to PAFRAS.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for this wonderful show of support for our work and solidarity with our service users.

The Rainbow Launched

The first issue of PAFRAS's new volunteer newsletter has now been published. The Rainbow which aims to be wholly written and produced for and by PAFRAS volunteers will be published quarterly.



ESOL Cuts ...continued from front page

The government's hypocrisy over this issue is especially concerning given the heavy emphasis placed on blaming migrants for low levels of social cohesion. In the whole of his speech Cameron spent only 140 words discussing what he sees as the positive aspects of immigration, while making much mileage out of vilifying the practices of some migrant communities.

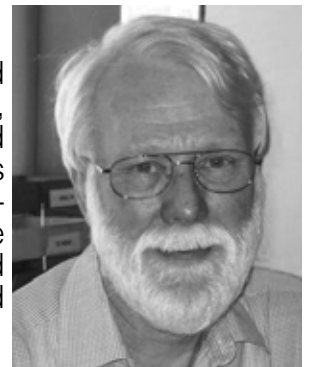
One hundred and fifty-eight words were expended to forced marriages and young, illiterate brides or grooms. Forced marriage is of course a concern for everyone interested in promoting universal human rights. What must also be concerning for us however is the Prime Minister's exploitation of such issues – marginal in their impact on overall immigration numbers – to the detriment of established migrant communities and new migrants themselves, particularly when language education is conceivably a central means by which victims of forced marriage might liberate themselves.

Where David Cameron is surely right is in his assertion that building cohesive communities takes time, and requires communication between people. Why then is his government intent on denying migrants the means of communication?

For information on the campaign against ESOL cuts visit the [Action for ESOL website](#).

Congratulations Jim!

On May 8th Jim Rowland ran the Leeds Half Marathon, completing the thirteen mile route in a sprightly one hour fifty minutes (and sixteen seconds). Jim also did impressively in terms of fund-raising and has so far raised over double his target of £500 for PAFRAS.



Jim said, "I really enjoyed the half marathon yesterday, 8 May. Having practiced and trained seriously, it was the fulfilment of an ambition I had had since before my 2008 heart attack. I did not do too badly for an old chap."

If you'd like to sponsor Jim it's not too late! His *Just Giving* page will remain open for another three months.

Visit: www.justgiving.org/Jim-Rowland

Donations

The heady days of harvest are now a distant memory and the PAFRAS food room, once overflowing with donations from our generous supporters, is looking a little bare.

Added to, this we're seeing a steady increase in numbers at the drop-in with the head-count frequently topping 100 already this year. Given this, any and all donations are extremely welcome!

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

Volunteers Needed

PAFRAS is looking for experienced creche workers to donate two hours per week to run the creche to support our new womens' group.

We also need a facilitator, preferably with experience of working with refugees and asylum seekers interested in leading our women's group, again for two hours per week.

We are not currently sure which day or at what time the creche and womens' group will be running.

If you have availability and are interested please contact Fidelis Chebe, the project co-ordinator: fidelis@pafras.org.uk.

