

ASU Asylum Seekers Unit newsletter

Issue 14 - Spring 2010

To celebrate 10 years of our work, the Asylum Seekers Unit hosted an event on 18th December that brought together partners and stakeholders from across the city.

Asylum Seekers Unit marks milestone anniversary

The unit was set up in December 1999 and has since worked hard to make sure that the service provided to the Home Office and our clients continues to be excellent. The unit has had to deal with changes in the way we offer support to clients and has successfully negotiated three contracts which have really benefitted clients. It has also developed new, more creative services along the way. We have spent a lot of time and effort

to successfully develop partnerships and support from the communities into which clients have been housed. The event in December was to celebrate all these fantastic and very effective partnerships.

Speaking of the event Vin Totton, Manager of YHN'S Asylum Seekers Unit, said:

"It is a significant milestone that our Asylum Seekers Unit has reached its tenth year in operation.

"This is ten years of providing temporary help and support to people who have had to flee their countries because they fear for their lives.

"We could not do this without the excellent partnerships we have developed across the city and beyond. This celebration is about recognising the

achievements of the unit and extending a big thank you to the staff and to all our partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors, with whom we have achieved so much."

Guest speaker, Gaby Kitoko, Development Manager of partner organisation ACANE, continued: "We have come a long way in the past ten years and whilst we still have a lot of work to do within the communities we serve, there is real cause for celebration when we look back at what has been achieved by the unit and its partners over the past decade."

76 people attended the event and on their arrival at YHN House were met with some music from central Africa.



Gaby Kitoko received an award presented by John Lee in recognition of the outstanding work ACANE have done in the region to build bridges within and between communities, particularly for black and minority ethnic communities.



Your Homes
Newcastle

Rocking the boat

A big thank you to all the women who helped us celebrate this year's International Women's Day in March.

Almost 100 clients enjoyed a hearty lunch, raffle, sunshine and very inspiring music provided by drummer Hannabiel and her musicians while cruising along the River Tyne. Our ladies joined in the drumming and singing and rocked the boat with dancing.

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day that connects all women around the world and inspires them to achieve their full potential. It celebrates the collective power of women past, present and future.

If you have any ideas about next year's trip or would like to post a comment on the day you can e-mail us at asylum.unit@yhn.org.uk We would love to hear from you.



"It was a wonderful day. I really enjoyed it"
Najat

"Wow, I can't wait for next year!"
Rahel from Benwell



Reporting repairs in council properties

At Your Homes Newcastle we are jointly responsible for looking after your home.

We rely on you to tell us about any repairs as soon as possible so that work can be arranged. We will make sure all properties are kept in good repair, including the structure and outside of your property.

If you need a repair you can report it to your Support Officer or directly to the Repairs Centre either by:

- Telephone: 0191 277 8888
- Text: You can text details of your repair by texting 'FIX' to 80800
- Fax: 0191 277 3674
- E-mail: repairs@newcastle.gov.uk (your email will be responded to within 24 working hours).

If your repair is an emergency please contact the Repairs Centre on the telephone number opposite.

You will be asked for:

- Your name
- Your address
- The nature of the problem
- A contact telephone number (if you have one)

We will always try to make an appointment at a time and date convenient for you.

If you live in a private property please speak to your Support Officer about any repairs.

Celebrating refugee led community organisations across Tyne & Wear

On 4th December 2009 the Regional Refugee Forum North East (RRF) organised a special event to show and celebrate the work of 15 of Tyne & Wear's refugee led community organisations (RCOs).

The community groups, the RRF's Right to Work Campaign, Skilled Project, Youth Voice and Arts Group made presentations about the great range of projects which support mixed communities and work to build new and positive relationships within Newcastle, Sunderland and Gateshead.



Speaking at the event the Lord Mayor of Newcastle Councillor Michael Cookson said:

"These organisations are now part of Tyne & Wear's community. I congratulate you all for these achievements and all this energy and drive.

"This celebration event is a wonderful way of recognising and acknowledging the efforts and achievements of those who selflessly dedicate their time and abilities to helping others.

"For those on the receiving end of voluntary assistance, it is often a lifeline. The vulnerable and the disadvantaged can rely upon volunteers to lessen their sense of isolation, to offer advice and support and to provide practical help. Volunteering is invaluable on this individual level, but it is also important on a community level. It can contribute to the regeneration and renewal of an area. It can help to create vibrant, energised and safer communities."

Volunteers from the RCOs, supporting communities in exile from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Sudan and Armenia, were presented with Certificates of Achievement and Appreciation for their work.

The event was a great success and is set to become an annual occasion with guests saying they had learnt much more about the work of RCOs. The RRF will continue to support the work of RCOs and work with them to develop these organisations.

See www.refugeevoices.org.uk for more information on these RCOs and the RRF's campaign groups, and details of the support that the RRF provides to them. A short film of the event will be available soon.

Crossing boundaries

Crossings is a multicultural community music project that aims to help asylum seekers and refugees come together with the community through music.

Everyone is welcome from amateur to professional musicians. Crossings provides an opportunity for people to sing and perform with other musicians, while learning to improve individual music skills.

One band member said: "I have been a member of Crossings since October 2009. For me, Crossings is not just about the music, it is also about meeting people from all over the world. If you love music, people and a friendly atmosphere, I would encourage you to visit our weekly rehearsals, which are held in Byker on Tuesdays. Everyone is welcome."

For more information visit www.crossings.org.uk



Email: info@refugeevoices.org.uk Tel: 0191 423 6255

Denton Young People's Project.

The LGBT Fed

The LGBT Fed is working towards setting up a group to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender asylum seekers and refugees living in Newcastle.

The first meeting was held in February and explored ideas around what support could be provided. Throughout this year the Fed hopes to provide social activities, peer to peer support and safe places to allow LGBT asylum seekers to make new friends and take advantage of the great city we all live in.

Those already involved in the group recognise the importance of support when applying to stay in the UK, and hope to be able to provide letters, petitions and advice for its members. The group is still in the early stages. Please contact the Fed for future events.

For more details visit their website at <http://lgbtfed.com/> or contact Simon, in the strictest confidence, by emailing simon@lgbtfed.com



A whole grotto fun

On 21st December the Asylum Seekers Unit, along with the Sage Gateshead, held an event in Santa's Grotto to give gifts to children living in Newcastle who rely on our support.

Almost sixty families enjoyed a festive afternoon at the Sage and visited Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus and Emily the Elf. The remaining gifts were distributed by Support Officers to those children who couldn't be there on the day.



We would like to thank everyone for the fantastic response to our Christmas appeal. We received generous donations from John Lee, Chief Executive of YHN, Neighbourhood Services, Unison, YHN and Newcastle City Council staff.

Disney store donated toys and gifts and Nestle contributed sweets. We are absolutely delighted with the support we received. It enabled us to make Christmas special to some of the most vulnerable families in our community, and we hope to bring more festive cheer next year.



Call into an ARCH Incident Reporting Centre.

You can report to:

Your Homes Newcastle Asylum Seekers Unit: 0191 278 8620

Any Your Homes Newcastle Community Housing Office across the city.

Any Newcastle City Council Customer Service Centre:

Civic Centre, Sandyford Road
Byker, Shields Road

West Denton Way

Kenton, Hillsview Avenue

Gosforth, Regent Farm Road

Or any of the following:

- **Racial Harassment Prevention Team**, Partnership Building - phone: 0191 211 5034

- **Victim Support**, Quaker House, Jesmond - phone: 0191 281 3791

- **Student Advice Centre**, Newcastle University, Northumbria University, Student Services:
City Campus: 0191 227 4967
Coach Lane: 0191 215 6493

Private Rented Project, 91 Tamworth Road - phone: 0191 273 6103

- **Nomade5** – phone: 0191 292 2649

- **North England Refugee Service**, Bigg Market - phone: 0191 222 0406

- **ACANE**, 1 Raby Cross - phone: 0191 265 8110

- **EMTEP**, 2 Shipley Avenue - phone: 0191 273 3099

- **Streetwise Northeast**, 35 Groat Market - phone: 0191 230 5400

- **MESMAC Northeast**, 11 Nelson street - phone: 0191 233 1333

- **Outpost** – phone: 0191 222 1937

Reporting racist and homophobic incidents

Racism and homophobia should not happen, but it still does. Nobody should suffer because of who they are and nobody should put up with it. You can do something about it.

If you, your family or friends are having problems because of your 'race' or skin colour, this is a racist incident.

If you, your family or friends are having problems because of your sexuality, this is homophobia.

Some of these types of incidents, such as verbal abuse and threats, are obvious but incidents, such as damage to your property, bullying or rude gestures, are harder to identify.

If you believe you have experienced a racist or homophobic incident, even if you have no proof, report it.

What is ARCH?

ARCH is the Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment and it works to stop hate crime in Newcastle.

You can report a racist or homophobic incident to ARCH.

It is a group of organisations working together to get the right help to victims and to take action against the attackers.

Everyone involved in ARCH will believe you and deal with an incident in the same way.

You decide what happens to your information, for example it can go to Victim Support and not to the police. You simply say yes to those you want help from.

How is ARCH different?

With just one telephone call you can get help from a range of organisations including: Your Homes Newcastle, the police, Victim Support, Racial Harassment Prevention Team, the Private Rented Project, Nomade5, Shelter, Streetwise, Connexions, MESMAC and Outpost Housing Project.

We all work together to get the best support to you and take action against the attackers. If you do not want to give your name and personal details you do not have to.

How do I report an incident to ARCH?

Freephone 0800 032 3288, 24 hours a day.

There is a interpretation service to over 100 languages.

You can report something that has happened to you, to someone else or about something you have seen.

ARCH are opening new report centres all the time, so keep an eye out for their posters. If you would like more information about ARCH or need to contact them, please email arch@newcastle.gov.uk or telephone **0191 277 7832**.

Useful telephone numbers

This information is about Your Homes Newcastle's Asylum Seekers Unit and how they make sure that asylum seekers and refugees are not disadvantaged during their time here. If you need this in your language or a different language phone 0191 278 8633.

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| Bengali | এই তথ্য হল ইউর হোমস নিউক্যাসল এসাইলাম সিকারস ইউনিট সম্পর্কে এবং এই ইউনিট এসাইলাম সিকারস (রাজনৈতিক আশ্রয়প্রার্থী) এবং রিফিউজিদের (শরণার্থী) এখানে অবস্থানকালীন সময়ে যাতে কোন বঞ্চনার শিকার না হয় কিভাবে সেটা নিশ্চিত করে সে সম্পর্কে তথ্য। এই তথ্য যদি <বাংলায়> অথবা অন্য কোন ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে এই নাম্বারে ফোন করুন- ০১৯১ ২৭৮ ৮৬৩৩ |
| Chinese (simplified) | 这是有关 Your Homes Newcastle (您的纽卡斯尔住房) 寻求庇护人士部门的信息, 内容解释了他们如何确保寻求庇护人士和难民在这里生活的期间内得到良好的生活条件。; 或其它语言版本, 请致电 0191 278 8633 索取。 |
| Chinese (traditional) | 這是關於 Your Homes Newcastle (您的紐卡素住房) 尋求庇護人士部門的信息, 內容解釋了他們如何確保尋求庇護人士和難民在這裏生活的期間內得到良好的生活條件。 其它語言版本, 請致電 0191 278 8633 索取。 |
| Farsi | این اطلاعات در مورد واحد پناهجویان در سازمان «خانه‌های شما در نیوکاسل» است. این واحد اطمینان حاصل می‌کند که پناهجویان و پناهندگان در طی مدت اقامتشان در اینجا دچار محرومیت نشوند. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان‌های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید. |
| French | Ces informations concernent l'unité des demandeurs d'asile de Your Homes Newcastle et la façon dont ils s'assurent que les demandeurs d'asile et les réfugiés ne sont pas désavantagés pendant leur séjour ici. Si vous avez besoin de ces informations en français ou dans une autre langue, téléphonez au : 0191 278 8633. |
| Kurdish | ئەم زانیاریانە سەبارەت بە یەکەمی پەنابەرانی Your Homes Newcastle و ئەوەی کە چۆن دنیایا بین کە پەنابەرانی و کۆچبەرانی لە و ماوەیەدا کە لێرەن هەستەمی و تالی ناچێن. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرینی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا هەر زمانیکی دیکە هەبە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوەندی بکەن. |
| Portuguese | Esta informação refere-se à unidade de Requerentes de Asilo da Your Homes Newcastle e à forma como garantem que os requerentes de asilo e os refugiados não estão em desvantagem durante a sua estadia cá. Se precisar desta informação em <português> ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 278 8633. |
| Russian | Информация об отделе по вопросам беженцев и их благоприятного пребывания здесь. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации <на русском> или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 278 8633. |
| Spanish | Ésta es información sobre la Unidad de Demandantes de Asilo Político Your Homes de Newcastle y de cómo se aseguran de que dichos demandantes y refugiados no vivan en condición de desventaja durante su estancia aquí. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633. |

Your Homes
Newcastle services
0191 278 8600

Asylum Seekers Unit
0191 278 8620

North of England
Refugee Service
0191 245 7301

East Area Asylum
Support Group
0191 262 2522

West End Refugee
Service
0191 273 7482

Newcastle City
Council Services
0191 232 8520

Repairs Centre
0191 277 8888

Envirocall
0191 274 4000

Newcastle Furniture
Service (NFS)
0191 278 1888

Community Care
Alarm Service
0191 278 8699

Local Police
0845 604 3043

Racial Harassment
Prevention Team
0191 262 1629

Agencies Against Racist
Crime and Harassment
(ARCH) Freephone -
08000 32 32 88

Asylum Seekers Unit

Your Homes Newcastle, YHN House, Benton Park Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7LX.

- Tel: (0191) 278 8620
- Fax: (0191) 278 8604
- Email: asylum.unit@yhn.org.uk
- Website: www.yhn.org.uk



Your Homes
Newcastle

Your Homes Newcastle Limited.
Registered in England and Wales.
Registration number 5076256.

Registered office: Newcastle Civic
Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle
upon Tyne, NE1 8PR.

A company controlled by
Newcastle City Council.