



# Newsletter

JULY 2024



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## Welcome!

Welcome to IASK's second newsletter of the year. We are thrilled to share the progress and achievements from this period, which has been marked by significant fundraising success, team development, and the launch of several exciting new projects. Our efforts are driving us closer to our goals, and we couldn't have done it without the support and dedication of our community.

## Spotlight

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# Welcome Mentor Project



## Football Match

Huddersfield Town Foundation donated tickets for our members to watch Huddersfield vs. Millwall. Everyone had a great time, and Huddersfield scored in the last moments, winning 1-0!

## Meat Donations

IASK received 20KG of meat donation from the Councils of Mosque as part of Eid ul Adha Share My Qurbani project and were distributed to families and individuals.

## Enhancing Volunteer Skills

As part of IASK's 2024 strategy, we are committed to enhancing our volunteers' skills and expertise. Recently, we conducted training in interpreting, safeguarding, and mental health, among other areas!

**Safeguarding Training in March:** The training aimed to deepen mentors' understanding of safeguarding principles, policies, and procedures, covering risks, abuse indicators, and appropriate responses. Attendees found it highly informative and helpful.

**Interpreter Training in April:** In April, we held an interpreter training for Welcome Mentors, covering effective methods like active listening, clarification, note-taking, and accurate conveyance of meaning and tone. Attendees gave positive feedback.

**CLEAR Training in February:** We organised CLEAR Training to educate volunteers on mental health issues like depression and anxiety. The session included a pre-question workshop, CLEAR referral procedures, and their services. Volunteers found it highly beneficial.

## Fortnightly Welcome Walks in Kirklees



Every fortnight, IASK hosts Welcome Walks in different locations across Kirklees. Welcome Walks provide the opportunity to get well acquainted with the local area and meet new friends. Recent walks have explored West Nab rock formations, Meltham village, Mirfield, local woods, Honley, and Farnley Tyas. Attendees enjoyed beautiful wildlife, rock formations, moors, and flowers.

## Volunteer & Refugee Week Event



On June 23rd, volunteers, along with their friends and family, gathered at Green Head Park to celebrate Volunteer and Refugee Week. We had a wonderful time with games, activities, and a delicious picnic in the sunshine.

## Eid Celebration

We hosted an Eid party on April 18th, attended by over 100 people seeking asylum and refugees. Guests enjoyed a delicious spread featuring Biryani, pizzas, chicken, vegetable curry, sandwiches, and more. The day was enjoyed by volunteers and members alike, serving as a cultural, communal celebration appreciated by those far away from home.



# Enhancing our Team

## Welcome New Trustees!

### Grace McManhon

With over 13 years of experience as a strategist, planner, and creative copywriter across luxury alcohol, FMCG, and charity sectors, Grace specialises in building purpose-driven brands globally. As a Trustee at IASK, she aims to increase empathy for asylum seekers and refugees, establish safer pathways to the UK, and expand IASK's impact to assist more individuals in need.

### Mohsen Usyan

Mohammad Mohsen Usyan, a public policy scholar from Erasmus University Rotterdam and the University of York, residing in Huddersfield as an asylum seeker with his family. With over 15 years of experience in charity work in Afghanistan, focusing on policy research, project management, and women's rights, he now collaborates with IASK as a Farsi-English interpreter since September 2023. As a Trustee, Mohsen aims to enhance governance at IASK to improve service delivery for migrants and asylum seekers, a vulnerable group in the UK.

### Junayed Hossain

Junayed holds a BSc in Computer Science and Engineering from BRAC University and an MSc in Financial Technology from the University of Huddersfield. Currently pursuing a doctoral degree in quantitative finance, he is dedicated to advancing the refugee sector. As an IASK trustee, Junayed aims to apply his expertise in financial strategies and data-driven decision-making to foster organisational growth and sustainability.

Stay tuned to hear from additional new trustees in our next volume!

## Creative Activities & Partnerships

Monthly, the Huddersfield library visits our Welcome Club to share information about their services and help clients apply for digital devices. Lawrence Batley Theatre have exciting creative activities at our Welcome Clubs as well as CLEAR.



## Welcome New Team Members!



Emilia D'Escrivan-Nott  
Asylum Caseworker



Kerry Fowden:  
Refugee Move-On Housing Advisor

## Spotlight



## About IASK's Homeless Housing Project

The Homeless Housing Project, launched on April 1, 2024, supported by Kirklees Council and Housing Solutions, addresses homelessness among post-decision refugees in Kirklees.

At IASK, we offer face-to-face support, including benefits advice, employment resources, and help with private accommodation. In the first two months, we've assisted over 35 people, including 21 homeless or rough sleeping.

Our services include Welcome Clubs on Wednesdays and Thursdays with Groundworks, and one-on-one appointments for benefits and housing. We also provide three months of tenancy support for housed individuals. So far, we've housed two people and are working with seven more.

Challenges include finding landlords who accept housing benefits and securing bonds. Despite this, the project's impact shows the importance of housing support initiatives.

## Interview with Dr. Pomeroy on Shanidar Z Discovery

We are thrilled to announce that Koshan, one of our volunteer Kurdish interpreters, interviewed Dr. Emma Pomeroy from Cambridge University. Dr. Pomeroy, a key member of the team behind the discovery of Shanidar Z, discussed its significance. The discovery of Shanidar Z, a female Neanderthal skull in Kurdistan, is a major breakthrough for science and holds particular importance for Kurdistan. The interview explored the details and implications of this finding, offering fascinating insights into our shared history.



Watch the full interview here: [An interview with Dr. Emma Pomeroy about Shanidar Z and Kurdistan \(youtube.com\)](#)

## Legal Good News: Client Granted Leave to Remain



We are delighted to share a significant and uplifting development: a client who entered the UK as an asylum seeker 12 years ago has been granted Leave to Remain. This achievement came through a private life application submitted by IASK under the seven-year rule.

IASK conducted a thorough assessment of the client's circumstances, confirming their continuous residence in the UK for over seven years. During this time, the client integrated significantly into British society, forming friendships, contributing to the community, and establishing a private life.

The Home Office reviewed the application and, recognising the compelling evidence of the client's established private life in the UK, granted Leave to Remain. This decision highlights the importance of the seven-year rule in protecting the rights of long-term residents who have made the UK their home.

## Asylum Backlog Crisis Causing Further Delays

Important figures released in February 2024 show a major increase in the backlog of Asylum and Immigration Tribunal cases. This means significantly longer waiting times for individuals waiting for their appeals to be heard in court. People seeking asylum could be severely affected by this situation, with potentially longer waiting times for appeal hearings.

The tribunal system experienced a surge in backlog from 4,500 to over 6,000 appeals in the span of just one month, October to November 2023.

Unfortunately, the number of court hearings remains stagnant at around 3,000 per month. This noteworthy increase in demand and static supply consequently leads to an inefficient tribunal system and further delays in the asylum process.







# Fundraising

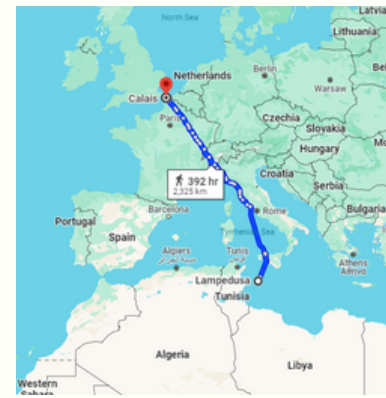
## A Thousand Miles for A Million Reasons IASK Sponsored Walk: Lampedusa to Calais

Over the course of six weeks, the IASK team collectively walked 1,777 miles, raising £1,777 in solidarity with refugees, reflecting the challenging journey many undertake from Lampedusa to Calais due to the lack of safe legal routes. Each week, we provided our followers with updates on our progress, along with relevant facts and information to raise awareness about the perilous route.

### Annual Pizza Day Fundraiser

On June 22nd, to celebrate the conclusion of our "A Thousand Miles for a Million Reasons" sponsored walk and to honour Refugee Week, we hosted a mini-festival to raise funds and awareness for our cause. The event featured live acoustic performances by local artists and delicious freshly baked pizza courtesy of Ooni Pizza Ovens. Combined with the funds raised from our walk, we collected a total of £2,393, surpassing our goal of £1,777.

**£2,393  
RAISED**





# Projects & Events

## ‘Voice’ Democracy Project: Same Skies

In the lead-up to the local and mayoral elections, IASK partnered with Same Skies Think Tank to create "Voice" – a project where IASK Welcome Mentors discussed democratic views and shared experiences. "Voice" aimed to influence the West Yorkshire mayoral election in Spring 2024 by amplifying asylum seekers' and refugees' voices. The project highlighted key experiences and issues, publishing daily quotes from participants to showcase diverse perspectives, break down barriers, and explore the true meaning of democracy.

## Theatre of Sanctuary: LBT

Lawrence Batley Theatre celebrated their Theatre of Sanctuary Award with a special Refugee Week event featuring speeches, dance, and music from refugee organisations and partners.

## Coming Soon!

13 JULY

## Songs of Summer & Sanctuary

Join Songs of Summer & Sanctuary and IASK for a spoken word fundraiser featuring award-winning poet Rose Condo! Sat, July 13 | 7 PM | Northlight Gallery, Huddersfield

Get tickets:

<http://wegottickets.com/event/623>

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## Spotlight



## Taste of Freedom Recipe Project

Introducing Taste of Freedom, a new initiative from Immigration and Asylum Support Kirklees celebrating the resilience of refugees and people seeking asylum in Kirklees through

cooking. We aim to share their incredible stories through delicious recipes, bringing flavours, traditions, and heartfelt connections to Kirklees. Taste of Freedom empowers refugees by sharing their recipes and stories, celebrating diversity through the universal language of food. Join us in uncovering these tales, one recipe at a time.



## Love Music Hate Racism & IASK: ‘Stop the Hate’ Tour



On July 4th, we teamed up with Love Music Hate Racism to host a special election day event at Northern Quarter in Huddersfield. The evening showcased live performances from local artists and DJs, speeches by activists, live graffiti art, and open mic sessions.







# Local Good News

## Spotlight

### Donard & Junior: Competing in the 2024 Paris Paralympics



My name is Donard, and my friend Junior and I are proud to be representing the Refugee Team at the 2024 Paris Paralympics.

Junior and I first met in 2019, bonding over our shared passion for running. Since then, we've trained tirelessly together, making it to the finals in the 400m T11 at the 2019 Tokyo Paralympic Games and the semi-finals at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games while representing Cameroon.

After facing challenges in Cameroon, we sought asylum in the UK and have continued to push ourselves, winning medals at the English Championship and recently qualifying for the Paralympic team in Switzerland.

This will be our first time representing the Refugee Team since receiving our refugee status, which means we can no longer compete for Cameroon.

It's a deeply emotional and significant honour to represent the Refugee Team this year. While Cameroon will always hold a special place in our hearts, our circumstances have changed, and we are now proud to stand with refugees worldwide. Our dream is to make it to the podium and inspire refugees everywhere with our performance.



## Thank you for supporting IASK!

### Welcome Club

#### Wednesday

1PM - 4PM  
Hudawi Centre, Great Northern Street, Huddersfield, HD1 6BG

#### Thursday

1PM - 4PM  
Quaker Meeting House, Church Street, Paddock, HD1 4TR

### Contact us



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