

Stand Up! Speak Out!

A toolkit to resist the Hostile Environment in public services.

(March - July 2023)



migrants
organise

PAFRAS
Positive Action for Refugees & Asylum Seekers



Impact of the training series August 2023

Background

This series originally began as a political education working group, which was born out of the Solidarity Knows No Borders (SKNB) summit in September 2021. The SKNB network links up over 60 migrant justice organisations groups and individuals, working in solidarity, to end hostility and racism against migrants and refugees. Through the physical isolation of the pandemic, we found inclusion and connection online which allowed for the political education group to be facilitated by different individuals and organisations from across the country. The group has predominantly been organised and facilitated by Migrants Organise, Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS) and Social Workers Without Borders who all became connected through the SKNB network.

The Political Education working group delivered two sessions in 2022 for the British Association of Social Workers' (BASW) AGM and annual conference and an online session for social workers across the country. Following the success of these events, we wanted to build on the power of collaborative working and in 2023 we ran the **Stand Up! Speak Out!: A toolkit for resisting the Hostile Environment in public services series** which we launched with an online event for Social Work England to commemorate World Social Work Day in March 2023.

Our mission

We view education as a powerful tool for social change. Stand Up! Speak Out! is designed to give public sector workers up-to-date knowledge of the rapidly changing immigration policy context and the implications for their work. We create spaces for public sector workers to reflect on their professional identity and empower them to resist complicity with hostile and inhumane immigration policy. We invite and inspire public sector workers to be allies in the movement for migrant justice.

There is so much expertise in the migrant justice NGO sector and we want to create a space for that expertise to be shared with public sector workers. We have kept their teaching space accessible by delivering it online, for free, and keeping webinars "bite-size". The aim is for public sector workers to be equipped with practical, transferable knowledge and skills that they can use when working with people with insecure immigration status.

Who's involved

Solidarity Knows No Borders Network - SKNB does not want to replicate or replace work that you are already doing, but instead support all of us to recruit new people and build our capacity, and provide resources that we can all use to build the movement and to win.

Organisers - This series has been organised by the Brian Dikoff, Legal Organiser at Migrants Organise, Naomi Jackson, Development Lead, Social Workers Without Borders, Ally Swadling, Young Person's Development Worker at PAFRAS and the young people who access PAFRAS.

Contributors - In addition to the organisers, sessions were also delivered by ASAP, Asylum Aid, Atleu, Asylum Aid, Atleu, BiD UK, Breaking Barriers, Dr Andy Jolly, Dr Chris Webster, Dr Jo Wilding, Dr Lucy Mayblin, Dr Maria Abranches, GMIAU, ILPA, Leeds Anti-Raids Action, MedAct, Migration Work, Project 17, We Belong, Wilsons LLP & Together Now.

A huge thank you to all the organisations who delivered sessions in the 2023 series. We couldn't have done this without your support and expertise!



Key statistics from SUSO 2023

24 sessions were delivered by 23 organisations and individuals from all over the UK.

3007

people signed up from all over England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland

1000+

actual attendees

average of

52

attendees per session

Attendees were from a range of frontline, management and senior practitioners from professions including social care, housing, employment, welfare, education & health

From attendees who chose to complete the feedback form:

99%

Either agreed or strongly agreed that they are more aware of the challenges faced by people seeking safety

95%

Either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident when supporting someone seeking safety and where to find relevant & accurate resources.

Feedback from attendees of SUSO 2023

I'm more able to raise awareness with others of the impact of precarious immigration status on young people.

I will cascade out the information to my team of social workers working with asylum seeking children, to build our practice.

Useful info to add to policies and to inform practice

Helped to understand history and how new legislation will impact . to hear about new research and take time to think about what i can do from a social work perspective

As I work in A&E, I know that I can see that the care I provide will not be charged for, so I can challenge other staff members who may be saying otherwise.

We can now be more confident of providing beneficiaries with good advice and are more likely to identify and obtain support for victims of trafficking.

This was a great session - I learned things i didn't even know and i have worked in NHS for 8 years!

I will be more confident when speaking to clients about NHS charges and more sensitive to their concerns. I will be clearer about our service's confidentiality & independence from the Home Office/ NHS

I was really impressed with how informative the session was whilst not being overwhelming. I feel like I know so much more now.

The sessions increased my awareness and understanding of challenges my students might face despite arriving here through legal routes - this may enable me to better support them.

We will conduct MP casework in a way that is more informed and effective at getting positive decisions.

This training series clarifies a lot of my questions about the mechanisms and impacts of the Hostile Environment at different points of contact with the state and public services.

Very good, really educational, informative and easy to digest in a short-session. The training runners are clearly very knowledgeable and passionate and you can see they want to help people

Feedback from contributors of SUSO 2023

"The series allowed for those outside of the sector to get valuable training that they otherwise would not have been able to be part of. We were able to reach an audience of public sector workers, who may know little about asylum support, but work with asylum seekers regularly to understand the realities of the asylum support system...and crucially the difficulties people face when trying to access safe and suitable accommodation.

There are so many amazing training opportunities to those within the sector, who already have a knowledge of the hostile environment, but to open out training and webinars to those who may not, is in my opinion invaluable."

- Holly Hepburn (ASAP), Asylum Support 101

"Presenting at the series was a fantastic experience that enabled me to engage with a large and diverse audience. The seminar series was extremely well organised and facilitated seamlessly. The series offered challenging and critical perspectives that hopefully will inspire genuine grassroots change alongside professional knowledge exchange."

- Dr Chris Webster (Yorkshire St Pauli) Leisure in a hostile environment: resisting border violence through informal leisure spaces

"I thought the series was a brilliant idea and was very happy to be involved. I wanted more time with people! Not sure how that would have been possible but maybe an offer of a follow up normal zoom format workshop type thing (still happy to do that) for those who came and wanted more or wanted to explore specific areas or problems. I would love to do some more sessions if possible. The organisation was excellent, the before and on the day."

- Sue Lukes (Director of MigrationWork and the UK's first migrant champion councillor and set up the migrant champions network), Accessing council housing services: eligibility and the hostile environment,

"Working on SUSO 2023 has significantly expanded my knowledge and deepened my understanding of the hostile environment in the UK. Throughout the course of the project, I had the opportunity to dive into various aspects that were previously unfamiliar to me. As a result, my skill set has grown, and I now feel more confident presenting complex tasks and approaching new projects. This experience has truly been a transformative journey that has not only enhanced my skills but also ignited a newfound passion for the field"

- Fatima, PAFRAS Volunteer Youth Ambassador

What's next? SUSO 2024!

Thanks to the amazing work of all our contributors, we want to run SUSO again next year and view 2023 as the pilot. We've learnt some really important lessons around logistics of running an online training series as well as what makes for a good practical webinar. We recognise that we weren't able to cover some key areas such as domestic violence and immigration law, a more general introduction to immigration routes, maternity and pregnancy, criminal law and immigration law and trauma-informed practice (to name a few!). We also want to focus on more follow-up work and we plan to create a toolkit for all attendees to assist them in taking the tools learnt from the webinars and putting them into practice.

For the 2023 edition of SUSO, a courageous and inspirational young person, Fatima, helped us to shape and deliver some of the sessions. We want to build on this work and Fatima will be taking the lead on developing various areas of the project and will be getting more young people with lived experience of the immigration system involved in both planning and delivery.

"Approaching this upcoming project SUSO 2024 with elevated responsibility and the opportunity of working with other young people fills me with mix of anticipation and determination. The increased role offers a chance to prove my capabilities which is both motivating but can be slightly nerve wracking. Working alongside others brings the excitement of diverse perspectives and skills. I'm committed to embracing this opportunity, learning from my teammates , and contributing my best to ensure a successful and rewarding outcome of SUSO 2024."

-Fatima, PAFRAS Volunteer Youth Ambassador

We have not received any funding for this series. The organisers and contributors have all done this work in addition to their daily roles and with a passion to fight for migrant justice. We will be exploring ways to further remunerate the youth volunteers for all their hard work as well as opportunities for further training and development.

We also want to reach more people! We are so proud of achieving over 3000 sign-ups and over 1000 actual attendees across the series. Fatima has already been working hard on building a database of every University social work course and heads of Local Authorities across the country and we will continue to try and build relationships and a powerful network of care and resistance.

We will be sending out an Expression of Interest form in Autumn 2023!