

## Newsletter – February 2024

### Our 2-day Health Inequalities Academy showcase event

In November we held our annual Health Inequalities Academy showcase event. The first day which was held virtually, concentrated on CORE20PLUS5 with the second day, held in person at Kala Sangam Arts Centre in Bradford, focused on our inclusion health work, including migrant health. We were privileged to have Wan Abdullah as our keynote speaker on the day. Wan spoke powerfully of her experience of seeking sanctuary.



The afternoon session was a particular highlight with MAFWA theatre hosting an interactive workshop which involved several of our delegates getting up to entertain us! MAFWA are a Leeds based theatre group that brings together refugees, asylum seekers and settled communities. [Check out more about their brilliant work](#). See our news pages to [read more about the two-day event](#).

We also shared our latest video featuring our very own Associate Director, Sarah Smith, talking about why it was so important that we embarked upon our sanctuary work and a recap of some of the work we have done so far, with a promise of much more to come: Watch [our Partnership of Sanctuary journey continues](#).

The second day ended with our Chair, West Yorkshire Deputy Medical Director and local GP Sohail Abbas, inspiring us all with his poem '**We have a dream.**' Members of our team loved it so much that we turned it into a short video afterwards. See [We Have a Dream](#).

It may only be February, but we are already planning this year's showcase event, which is likely to be held in late June. If you have any feedback, comments or ideas, or you'd like to be involved – do contact us at [paula.sherriff1@nhs.net](mailto:paula.sherriff1@nhs.net) to arrange a chat.

### **Inclusion health work**

Our Inclusion Health Lead, Beth, has been working on several initiatives around supporting people who are seeking sanctuary. One of the things we've heard from people seeking sanctuary is that they would really like access to dentistry, so Beth and the team have been working hard to procure an NHS dental service for people seeking sanctuary. Whilst capacity will be limited at this stage, we're excited to launch this service soon.

Also in the pipeline is the introduction of an Inclusion Health Community Board. This will ensure that people with lived experience will have the opportunity to feed into and inform service and policy going forwards.

If you'd like to know more about this, please contact [paula.sherriff1@nhs.net](mailto:paula.sherriff1@nhs.net).

### **Safe Surgeries training**

We know how important it is that people are not turned away when trying to access primary care, particularly GP services. It's therefore pleasing to see that over 60% of GP practices in West Yorkshire have now completed this training, which is delivered by Doctors of the World. This is the highest rate in the whole region, but we are working hard to ensure the rest are signed up so that everybody can access safe and welcoming primary care services. Building on this success we are looking at creating some resources and training to equip our primary and secondary care colleagues with knowledge and skills so that they can better understand the needs of people seeking sanctuary.

## **Spotlight on Wakefield**

The Improving Population Health Team at West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership has partnered with the **Wakefield District City of Sanctuary branch at St Michael's Church** and are collecting donations of quality clothing that can be distributed to people seeking sanctuary, particularly those who arrive at the Initial Accommodation Centre (Urban House) in Wakefield. If you're having a sort-out and would like to donate, they are particularly in need of (gently used) men's clothing, teenage clothing, new underwear, including socks for children. They are also appealing for any old smartphones that people may have lying about at home - please contact [Home - Wakefield District City of Sanctuary](#) or [paula.sherriff1@nhs.net](mailto:paula.sherriff1@nhs.net)

Have you visited the '**Welcome to Wakefield**' website? – it contains lots of useful and practical information, particularly for those who have recently arrived here, you can find it here [Welcome to Wakefield – Your friendly guide to the city of Wakefield](#).

We are also participating in the community of practice group that has been established by the **Art House in Wakefield**, who are also a studio and gallery of sanctuary. [Learn more about the brilliant work of the Art House](#).

Several working groups are being set up to look at specific areas including volunteering and training and we'll provide any updates in our next newsletter.

**Wakefield Theatre**, which is also a theatre of sanctuary, run free workshops, classes and theatre visits as part of their year-round participation programme, designed to support and welcome refugees and asylum seekers. This includes Wakey Wakey which are free drop-in sessions filled with story time and activities aimed at 3 and 4-year-olds and their families (younger and older siblings are very welcome too). These sessions offer the opportunity to practice English, make friends and have fun together. [Learn more about Wakey Wakey](#).

We will be spotlighting all our five Places in forthcoming newsletters – do let us know if you would like to share any information about things that are going on where you live or work.

### **NEW – health inequalities webpage**

For anyone working in the health and care sector or for one of our valued VCSE partners, we have a new health inequalities webpage where you can find out more about the work being done by the Improving Population Health Team. Registration is required. To log on see:

<https://westyorkshirehealthinequalities.co.uk>

### **We'd love to hear from you!**

As ever, we're keen to hear from you – is there anything you would like us to include in future editions of this newsletter or would you like to get involved with some of our work around supporting people seeking sanctuary. Perhaps you have some ideas of how we can promote **National Refugee Week from 17-23 June?**

Please do not hesitate to get in touch for an informal chat at [paula.sherriff1@nhs.net](mailto:paula.sherriff1@nhs.net).