

Brushstrokes Messenger

father
**Hudson's
Care**

"We must be in the hand of God like a brush in the hand of the painter"

Nicolas Barré

January

2022



Well deserved recognition for a highly respected Manager, Dave Newall

"It was a huge surprise and an honour to be awarded the British Empire Medal for services to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the New Year Honours. Over the past 20 years working in the field of migration, from the start of asylum seeker dispersal in Stoke-on-Trent at Citizens Advice, to operational and policy work at West Midlands Strategic Migration part-

nership, research and consultancy on migration and migrant health and now almost 5 years managing Brushstrokes, it has been my privilege to be able to work with those seeking refuge and new arrivals wanting to settle in the UK.

In seeking to build community we must continue to reach out to those who for whatever reasons, whether through poverty, language, homelessness, health, fear or immigration status find themselves on the margins. I have been humbled so often by the resilience, hope, friendship and skills of those new arrivals who seek help at Brushstrokes each week despite the many obstacles they have and continue to face. Seeing individuals who have been able to move into education, employment, settle and take an active role in the community extending help and support to others is the most rewarding part of this work.

Brushstrokes' work is made possible by a wonderful team of staff and volunteers who continue to work tirelessly to ensure asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in our area are welcomed and provided with the support and advice they need and the spirit of partnership between organisations in our area. This award is also recognition of the contribution of the whole Brushstrokes team who are helping make Sandwell a place of welcome for the stranger.

For me, that someone sees fit to recognise that service to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants is worthy of this award gives me hope that a new narrative around migration is possible, one that is built upon tangible ordinary acts of kindness and compassion by local people and communities. Welcome and integration are more than strategies, policies and initiatives, they require hands, feet and a willingness to reach out to others. I also hope this award can shine a spotlight on the work of countless others in Sandwell, and up and down the country, who are providing welcome, shelter, support and opportunity to migrants, and that the vital role they play might be increasingly seen, appreciated and understood by local communities, politicians and policy makers.

Dave "

Brushspokes Bike Project gains momentum:



Thanks to kind donations from the Brushstrokes community, we are providing more of our service users with bikes, as well as bike equipment to keep them safe on the roads of Sandwell and further afield. Minor repairs are carried out by Brushstrokes staff to get donated bikes back on the road, and this month we've also distributed bike locks, helmets, lights and bells. Here are a couple of photos of a bike being handed over to Brushstrokes (thanks Sarah and Steve Murch) and one of our service users who has benefitted from a new bike helmet.



Cricket with the Afghan families:

There's not much positive news coming from the England cricket world following the drubbing in the Ashes down under, however, in this corner of Sandwell, cricket sessions with the Afghan families are going from strength to strength. Here are a few snaps from our Tuesday



afternoon games down at the artificial wicket on Sandwell Valley Park. Our crowd might be flocks of Canada geese and bemused dog walkers instead of raucous Aussie fans, but we are having a great time honing our skills. Shaban, Samim and Baghran are three of the most eager cricketers, and alongside Naz and Bryan, we're reaching out to the Edgbaston Foundation to set up a relationship that will hopefully lead to more cricketing exploits. A massive thanks to the Brushstrokes community who've been donating us such great and essential cricket equipment.



Brushstrokez Games Zone:

This month we are excited to announce the launch of Brushstrokez Games Zone. These are weekly sessions, 5-7pm, and despite them being open to all service users, we particularly seek to attract single people who have very limited opportunities and finances to socialise and pursue leisure activities. We hope that through participation in the activities, attendees will form wide-ranging friendships, develop wider support networks, and acquire new skills. Just some of the activities we'll have on offer include chess, table tennis, Scrabble, computer games, backgammon, draughts, table football as well as bicycle repair. An extremely kind supporter of Brushstrokes provided us with a donation to buy a tennis table for our activity – we were bowled over by the generosity and the donor hopes that anybody using it will get a lot of fun from playing and it'll be something that brings people together





Service User Panel update:

In this month's service user panel meeting, as well as the usual constructive discussions of key issues that affect our service users, we invited Lee Goodway from Fircroft College to talk about courses available to our service users. Fircroft College, which has status of a College of Sanctuary, has a reputation for welcoming all learners to their courses, and their *Free Thinking* course is particularly targeted at asylum seekers and refugees. This is a residential course on weekends for a period of ten weeks and covers English language, Employability skills, Rights and responsibilities, Wellbeing and confidence building skills, IT and presentation skills development and Team

building and problem-solving skills. Some of our service users are already in conversation with the college to pursue this, as well as other courses that will be valuable to their future development.



Left to right Mahmoud Shoul & Lukano

Thank you Brushstrokes, especially Lukano for making it possible for me to have a Passport in my life and this is like a dream come. I will now be able to travel to Egypt and be able to visit my family whom I have not seen in 10 years.

Thank you

Rest in power Desmond Tutu

It is with great sadness that we lost Desmond Tutu at the end of last year.

Tutu was pivotal in the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

He was an uncompromising man of faith and inspired people from all backgrounds and faith. His legacy is reflected in the work we do at brushstrokes

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

A number of the older staff members at brushstrokes marched in London against apartheid which ended in 1990 thanks to a global movement.

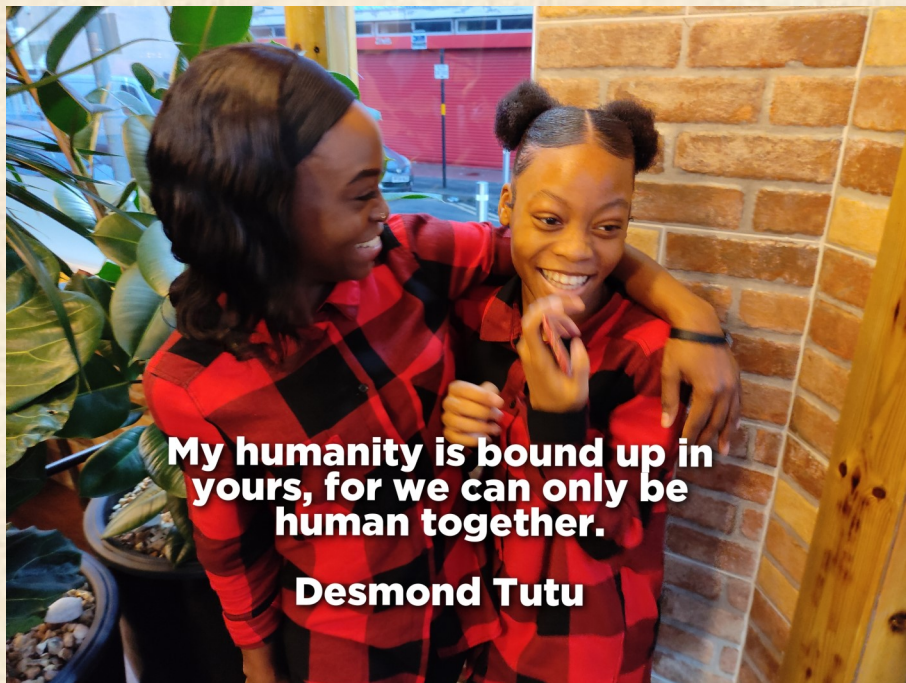
Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation in South Africa and many people at the time said it would never end.

People like Desmond Tutu had other ideas.

If it wasn't for people like Desmond Tutu and the anti apartheid movement, a whole generation of people working with refugees and migrants may have not taken up the mantle of continuing his legacy and work.

We continue to see inequality and a hostile environment in our work and will continue to represent, stand alongside and stand up for those who are marginalised in our communities

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality"



Lewin Williams who has cancer and is now battling with the Home Office who want to send him back to Jamaica. Pictured at

More than 130,000 people have signed a petition calling for Jamaican migrant and cancer patient [Lewin Williams to remain in the UK](#).

The 74-year-old, who lives in [Acocks Green](#), has been battling blood [cancer](#) since 2019 and fears being sent back to Jamaica - a place where he can't afford medical treatment and has no family.

A petition was started by Salman Mirza, Lewin's caseworker, in July 2021, and has been quickly gaining support.

It says 'Birmingham is his home now and people reading about his story from all walks of life are urging the Home Office to let him stay.'

After his application to remain was rejected in 2019 - Lewin has been granted permission to appeal.

Although the petition has gained widespread support, Salman has said the 'frustration of delays' in the process does not help the situation.

He told [BirminghamLive](#): "We have been waiting for an appeal which has been granted since May last year, we have chased this up and asked the Home Office reconsider their refusal but to date have heard nothing. This is alarming as Lewin is a cancer sufferer and added stress will not help his already fragile health condition."

In December the Home Office told [BirminghamLive](#): "We do not routinely comment on individual cases. All applications are considered on their individual merits in line with the Immigration Rules."

Games & bike repair club

Brushstrokes Community Project

Come make friends have a cuppa
Play chess Wednesday's 5-7

253 Smethwick high street B663NJ

Contact Bryan on 07827258680

THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME DEADLINE HAS PASSED

**ARE YOU AN EU, EEA OR SWISS PARENT RESIDENT
IN THE UK BY 31 DECEMBER 2020?**

**CHECK IF YOU NEED TO MAKE A LATE
APPLICATION FOR YOUR CHILDREN
EVEN IF YOU HAVE APPLIED
YOURSELF.**



HM Government

Apply now at:
gov.uk/eusettlementscheme

Switching from EUSS pre-settled status to settled status

Individuals with pre-settled status can apply to switch to settled status as soon as they are eligible. This is usually after someone has lived in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for 5 years in a row (known as 'continuous residence').

To switch, a person must apply to the EUSS again before their pre-settled status expires. For further information, please refer to the guidance available on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk).

**CHECK IF YOU NEED TO
MAKE A LATE
APPLICATION TO THE EU
SETTLEMENT SCHEME
FOR YOUR CHILDREN
EVEN IF YOU HAVE
APPLIED YOURSELF**

If you are an EU/European Economic Area (EEA) citizen or the family member* of an EU/EEA citizen, to continue living, working and studying in the UK after it leaves the EU, you will have to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The application is free.



HM Government

Apply now at:
gov.uk/apply-settled-status-for-child

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UNDER 16S TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

Contact us:

Brushstrokes Community Project

253 High Street,

Smethwick,

B66 3NJ

Phone: 0121 565 2234

E-mail: info@brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

Website: www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk

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