



**A Year of
Generating Change**
Impact Report 2019

Looking back over 2019, what has made you proud of Praxis?



Barbara Roche, Chair of Praxis

I am proud to see that Praxis is generating change at every level and that we are working with a growing number of local authorities, homelessness organisations, hospitals and other service providers to expand our reach and to help people live safely and in dignity.

I am proud that our advice team has grown in size and expertise, with immigration advisers and solicitors supporting nearly 2,000 people to access their rights, operating in settings where it is normally impossible to access immigration advice and where people need it most.

It was a tribute to the organisation that our housing project received widespread public recognition through the Homeless Link Excellence Award and the Guardian Public Service Awards.

Finally, I am proud of the many ways in which Praxis is supporting the voice of its service users, enabling them to advocate for their rights, challenge stereotypes, feed into parliamentary consultations, host public events and even publish poetry collections.

How do you make sure that service users' views are part of decision-making at Praxis?



Kemi, Service User Representative in 2019

As one of Praxis' Service User Representatives, I have been a middle person between the trustees and service users. There are a number of steps I've taken to make sure that the voices of the people coming to Praxis are heard by the trustees.

First of all, I am an active member of the Service User Forum, and here I engage in discussions about what we as service users need, or our views on Praxis' services and environment. People coming to the forum have very different views, so we might be discussing the same issues for a while before we reach a conclusion that is good for everybody. I then join the trustees' meetings, where I report what has been decided at the forum, making sure that I don't put my own opinion first. If the trustees have questions that I cannot answer I report them back to the forum, so we can find an answer together.

Some of the issues that we have fed into this year include the development of Praxis' Theory of Change, as well as conversations on our existing and future premises.

What are the challenges ahead for Praxis?



Sally Daghlian OBE, Praxis Chief Executive Officer

Apart from practical challenges - like finding a new home for Praxis after 35 years in Pott Street - the biggest challenge is the exponential rise in need. More and more people face the injustice of being pushed out of our communities because of their migration histories. A hostile policy environment is demanding documents that people don't have - or cannot afford due to the cost of fees; the immigration system is inherently complex and inhumane; and free expert advice has never been so scarce. People are left isolated and in real hardship, and Brexit is adding to this crisis, pushing hundreds of thousands of people towards a precarious future.

Praxis punches above its weight thanks to the energy, skill and dedication of our staff and volunteers and the generosity of our donors - but this is not enough. We must strengthen our capacity to influence, and campaign to address the root causes of injustice. We must expand our alliances and partnerships, create conversations that challenge the prevailing hostile and xenophobic narrative.

“ We must strengthen our capacity to influence, and campaign to address the root causes of injustice.”

We must be resilient and optimistic in these dark times. Praxis has always recognised the capacity and power of individuals to create change - our service users are not passive recipients of our services or mere victims of the system. They inspire us with their creativity and solidarity. We will face the challenges ahead together, striving to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and can live in safety, regardless of their place of birth or family history.

One year of Praxis



January

We start 2019 with a bang, and reopen GIANTS, our peer support group for men, after a very successful pilot programme.

February

Far too many migrants are barred from accessing public support, and we work to overturn this. Among many others, we support a young disabled man – it will take nine months to reinstate his benefits.

March

In the first three months of 2019 we have provided advice to just under 200 people on immigration, housing and welfare issues.

April

We start working with the London Borough of Newham, providing vital immigration advice to residents facing homelessness and destitution.



August

We enjoy the summer in style, and go on a trip to Brighton with 40 families and 40 children from our housing project as well as from WINGS, the group for mothers.



July

Praxis is selected as a finalist in the Guardian Public Service Awards and declared the winner of a Homeless Link Excellence Award for our innovative housing project.



June

Throughout Refugee Week we celebrate our staff members, volunteers and trustees with a refugee background and show that refugees are often at the giving end of services.

May

We open our EU Settlement Scheme project, supporting EU citizens and their family members so they can live safely in the UK after Brexit.



September

We complete the first year of our hospital project, where we provide advice to migrant patients to prevent homelessness following discharge.

October

Our training on support available for survivors of trafficking, delivered in collaboration with St Martin's Frontline Network, is a complete success. More than 41 frontline workers came to learn how to best support their service users.

November

Members of Brighter Futures host the public event 'Words Apart', where they present their poetry collection and challenge stereotypes about what it means to be a young migrant in London.



December

We advocate for a family of three generations affected by the Windrush scandal. Seven family members are eventually recognised as British citizens by the Home Office. They share their experience with the Guardian and BBC, and shed a light on the fact that, despite all the promises from the Home Office, long-term residents and their children are still affected by this injustice.



Generating Change for Migrants in Need

➤ At Praxis we change lives on a daily basis. We recognise that people have multiple needs, and we support them to thrive by resolving complex immigration problems and through housing and peer support groups.



14,259

WE PROVIDED 14,259 NIGHTS OF SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Safe Housing

Our award-winning housing project doesn't just put a roof over heads. Throughout 2019 we made sure that families and single women facing homelessness and without access to mainstream support had a safe and restorative place to live. Apart from providing accommodation, we supported our residents to settle down in their new areas and welcomed them to our peer support groups. In addition, we offered expert legal advice to enable them to resolve their immigration issues, access mainstream support and move on with their lives.

“I feel safe in my own space... It's changed my life and now when I'm walking out I'm proud.”

Praxis resident



1,971

WE PROVIDED EXPERT LEGAL ADVICE TO 1,971 PEOPLE

Securing Rights

Our legal team expanded to 19 expert advisers and solicitors to help more and more migrants at risk to access their rights and live in safety. Building on our unique expertise, in 2019 we supported a growing number of people facing homelessness and destitution. We extended our projects to reach and support EU citizens in need so they can safely live in the UK following Brexit. We supported those falling through the cracks and at the margins of society, such as victims of the Windrush scandal, survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, undocumented young people, and those without access to mainstream support.

“My immigration issue was solved, homelessness issue was solved, Praxis are really doing a great job. Because the outcome was so good and made me happy, my crying days and nights turned to laughter.”

Praxis service user



96%

96% OF GROUP MEMBERS FEEL THAT PRAXIS HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES FOR THE BETTER

Building Communities

In 2019 some 500 people came to Praxis' peer-led groups and events to build confidence, develop skills, and forge friendships that will last lifetimes. From mothers to men to young people, our service users find strength through shared experiences. Group sessions empower members to engage with the wider community and have their voices heard, which in turn helps to change public discourse and policies.

“Thanks Praxis, since I come here for me everything has changed.”

Praxis service user

“WINGS is like making happiness.”



“Praxis house is good for peace of mind, and it's quiet, whenever I think about the house I feel happy. I like when Carlos comes, he comes from Praxis to see if we need anything, if there are things that need to be fixed. Sometimes when he comes we do gardening together and we plant flowers. I spend a lot of time in the garden, it's good to make time pass instead of thinking about negative things. When I first moved into the house with my daughter Diya I was a bit scared, I didn't know anyone living here and I was feeling lonely, but now I feel we are like family.”

“It's Carlos who told me about WINGS and convinced me to go, to feel less alone. Now I like it too much! WINGS is like making happiness, every week I go there at Praxis to meet with other mothers, whenever I go I look at all the smiley faces, it doesn't matter if I am happy or sad, I know that I will be happy at the end of the day.”

“When I go to Praxis I also meet with Dalia, she helped me with my immigration case. Before knowing about Praxis I had been refused my leave to remain, I felt stuck, like I was falling in a black hole. The first time I met Dalia she told me about my real options, she explained the Home Office refusal letter and talked about what we could do next. It didn't take Praxis very long time to help me get a visa, just three or four months, before that I had been stuck for more than two years.”

“The day I got the visa I was too much happy! I went to WINGS and I told everyone, and all the other mums were cheering and told hurray, that was my happiest moment.”

Illustration: Javie Huxley

Generating Change with Service Providers

➤ At Praxis we don't just help individuals. We work to create systemic change by improving public understanding and ensuring migrants are able to access more and better services.



11

WE COLLABORATED WITH
11 LONDON BOROUGHS

Working with Local Authorities

In 2019 we expanded our work with local authorities and the Greater London Authority to make sure that councils across London are better equipped to support migrants in need. We train frontline workers and managers so they can better understand the challenges faced by their migrant residents. We look at policies and processes with the aim of improving local authority services and reducing discrimination.

“Immensely helpful.”

Referrer from a local authority



654

THANKS TO OUR TRAINING,
654 PEOPLE ARE BETTER
EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT
MIGRANTS IN NEED

Expanding our Impact through Training

Through our fast-growing training programme, in 2019 we shared our expertise in supporting migrants in need with frontline staff working in hospitals, homeless organisations, schools, local authorities and charities. We provide knowledge of immigration policies and practical insights on support available, and encourage the implementation of best practices in migrant support.

“Really useful, clear and concise afternoon, which was informative and enlightening. I will be taking the learning back to my organisation and sharing with the team.”

Training attendee



89

WE SUPPORTED 89 PATIENTS
FACING HOMELESSNESS

Preventing Homelessness before Hospital Discharge

Working within four hospitals across London in collaboration with the charity Pathway, we make sure that migrants in need don't fall into homelessness following discharge. Lack of awareness of rights and insecure immigration status can lead to patients being discharged onto the streets. We provide expert immigration advice and casework, and we advocate with social services to make sure that migrants in need can access suitable accommodation after leaving hospital. At the same time, we train hospital staff so that they are better able to support their migrant patients.

“The project has responded effectively to a gap in services and this can prevent or relieve destitution and homelessness.”

From independent evaluation of hospital project

Addressing Root Causes of Homelessness

More and more people are facing homelessness due to issues with their immigration status. By collaborating with a growing number of homelessness organisations we reach those most in need, and provide vital immigration advice and support so that more and more people can permanently escape homelessness.



135

WE GOT 135 PEOPLE OFF
THE STREETS





Generating Change by Strengthening Voices

“ Today I was able to, if only for a moment, see the world from the eyes of amazing people on stage, live through their worries and see some of their joy”

Member of the audience at Words Apart

*For the decision makers
For the people who know our lives are worth understanding
For the people who see a piece of paper
Where I only see gold
For people seeking to be educated
For people without people
Who stand in the shadow of the past*

Extract from 'Who is this poem for?', by members of Brighter Futures

Lift the Ban

In 2019 Praxis' service users joined Lift the Ban, campaigning to grant asylum seekers the right to work. They joined members of more than 230 organisations throughout the UK and sent postcards to the Home Office, drew placards, joined public events and were featured in *The Economist*, calling for the right of asylum seekers to live in dignity.

Lift the Ban is a campaign coordinated by Refugee Action and Asylum Matters



➤ We strengthen the voices of our service users so that they can reshape the narrative on migration through public events and campaigns, and influence people who have the power to achieve long-term, positive change.



Challenging Stereotypes about Migrants

By the members of Brighter Futures, Praxis' group of young migrants fighting for change.

“Immigration policies regularly prevent us young migrants from working and studying, which leads to many people not seeing us as resourceful or talented. We decided to host Words Apart, a public event

challenging the narrow rhetoric on young migrants, to let as many people as possible understand our situation and know our worth.

Throughout 2019 we spoke up about what it means to be a young migrant through art and poetry, and through Words Apart we showcased our work, creativity and ambition to more than 100 guests.

We turned our poems into pieces of art, written on mirrors, windows

and placards, and we used them as starting points for a public discussion about the impact of immigration policies and Brexit talks, as well as our love for ourselves.

We wanted people to know that we are skilled and resourceful, and we showed what it's like to be a young migrant in the UK in a variety of ways, using poetry, visual art, panel discussion, interactive performances and film.

Creativity can reach people in a way that statistics can't, and through our work we built new bridges, helping guests to understand our situation and what we are going through. It was a great success, we had lots of positive feedback – and we inspired new people to think differently about young migrants, and what it means to be held back in life because of immigration policies.”

Windrush

In 2019 we continued supporting members of the Windrush generation in speaking out against the injustices of the Windrush scandal on national and international media platforms, at consultations and public events. They highlighted new facets to the injustice, proposed solutions, and fed into the design of the compensation scheme for victims of the scandal.



8,100

MORE THAN 8,100 PEOPLE RESOLVED THEIR STATUS THANKS TO THE WINDRUSH TASK FORCE

A Peek into Praxis

Bethan, Casework, Training and Advocacy Manager

“ I started working at Praxis 18 years ago, after having completed an MA in Human Rights. When I got here I saw a vibrant place full of incredible people working hard to realise the rights of migrants both on an individual and at a policy level; I felt straight away that I'd found somewhere special, and I've been here ever since.

“My job title has changed numerous times over the years, the most recent incarnation being Casework, Training & Advocacy Manager. What that means is that I co-manage our advice casework, maintain a very small client caseload myself, provide external training on migration issues, work with our partner organisations to improve the services that they provide to migrants, and advocate for changes to improve policies and procedures which negatively impact migrants.

“The most joyous part of my work is resolving someone's case, seeing the relief in their faces and knowing we've made a positive difference.”



Pasha, Trustee and Vice-chair

“ I admire the energy of the staff and their perseverance on behalf of service users. I also value that service users' voices drive the way Praxis delivers services. This is important because it keeps people at the heart of our work, not doing what we think is in someone's best interest but doing what that person has expressed to us as being in their best interest.

“As part of Praxis board of trustees I hope I listen more than I speak...I try to be thoughtful in the questions I ask and to be balanced so as to ensure that the team focuses on the work required to deliver against Praxis' strategy. My hope is that all people living in the UK have equal access to services and opportunities to thrive here. I hope one day that government policy and practice creates a healthy environment for all our communities - and that there is no need for a place like Praxis.”

Carlton, Service User Representative

“ I have been coming to Praxis for almost five years. I initially came to get my papers sorted, now I am part of the men's group GIANTS, a member of the Service User Forum, and at the end of 2019 I was elected a Service User Representative. As a Rep, I intend to go to the board meetings and point out things that can be done for the people who come to Praxis. I have been struggling with my immigration status for about ten years, and I have been homeless for eight, so I know what people like me need and how Praxis can help us better. What I like about Praxis is that when I come I interact with other people, we get things off our chest and we are in a more relaxed place, it feels very good. I always try to point out the positive things for others and shine light, highlight the positive things so we can all be better.”



Carlos, Housing Officer

“ When I arrived in the UK as an asylum seeker I started attending a group of Latin people meeting at Praxis. I immediately felt a strong connection with social justice and the work Praxis was doing to support Latin Americans and other displaced communities from around the world. I started volunteering on and off for Praxis, until I became a member of staff. I have worked in a variety of roles at Praxis, supporting migrants and refugees with access to employment and skill development, and now I help the families living in our housing project. I really like this particular project, it reminds me of my childhood, when my mother had to look after me and my two siblings while my father was in prison for political reasons.”



Laszlo, Volunteer

“ I came to Praxis for a university placement when I was studying Applied Anthropology and Community Development at Goldsmiths, University of London. I started volunteering in 2016 and I never left. As a volunteer I'm one of the co-facilitators of GIANTS, a space for men from refugee, asylum-seeker and migrant backgrounds. I believe this is a quite unique and magical space. As a co-facilitator I'm responsible for making sure that the group members feel safe and comfortable to express themselves. The most rewarding aspects of my role are usually very simple: the good times and the laughs we share, the connections we make or thoughts inspired by the group. We often overlook the impact of a laugh in the group. It can only be understood if you are there and you feel and share the vibrations with the other group members. I feel really lucky to be able to recognise the greatness of these small moments.”





Support us

Praxis relies on the generous support of volunteers, donors, individuals and partner organisations. Together we make a significant difference to the lives of thousands of people, and we reach many more through our training and our policy and advocacy work.

Follow our stories

www.praxis.org.uk

Donate

www.praxis.org.uk/donate

Fundraise

www.praxis.org.uk/fundraise

Volunteer

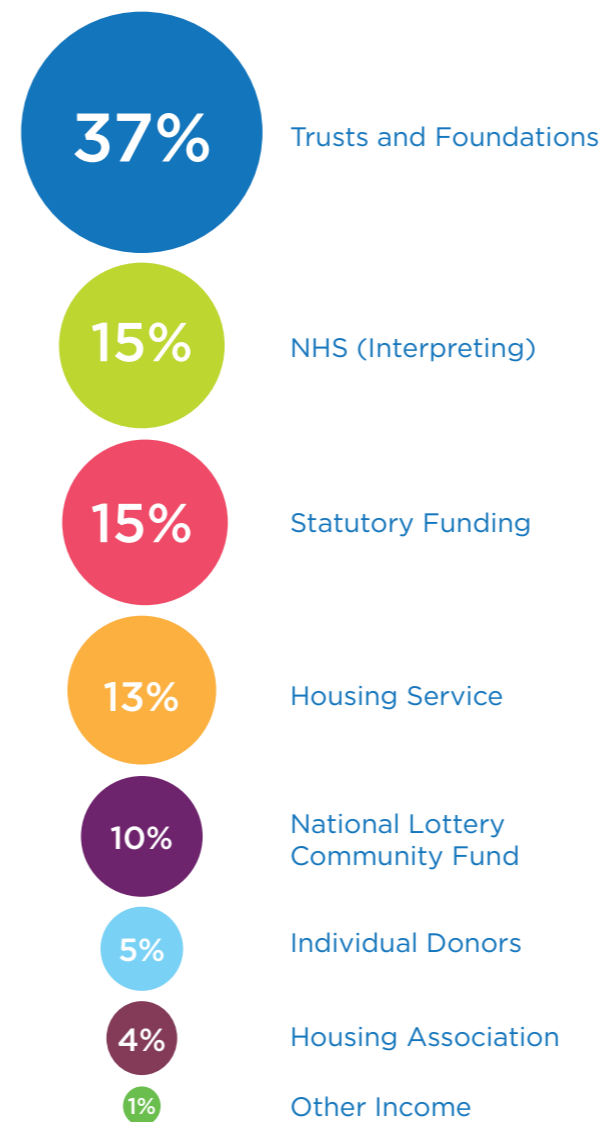
www.praxis.org.uk/volunteer

Praxis 2018-19 financial year

CHARITY BALANCE SHEET 31 MARCH 2019

	£
Fixed assets	
Tangible fixed assets	15,539
Current assets	
Debtors	203,226
Cash in bank and in hand	729,822
Creditors	
Amounts falling due within one year	(233,854)
Net current assets	699,194
Total assets less current liabilities	714,733
Creditors	
Amounts falling due after one year	(51,816)
Net assets	662,917
Charity funds	
Restricted income funds	51,521
Unrestricted income funds	
General reserves	425,396
Designated	186,000
Total charity funds	662,917

£1,902,164
total income



£1,596,799
total expenditure



2018/19 was a positive year for fundraising, with Praxis being one of the recipients of the Guardian and Observer 2018 charity appeal. We also achieved an increase of 38% in the level of individual donations received in comparison with 2017/18.

At 31 March 2019, we held general reserves, calculated in line with Charity Commission guidelines, equating to approximately three months of our running costs.

£186,000 of our unrestricted reserves has been earmarked for investment in the sustainability of the charity, as well as for meeting the anticipated costs of moving to new premises when our lease ends.

We are committed to high standards in fundraising and are registered with the fundraising regulator.



Thank you to all our supporters, donors, partners, staff and volunteers who helped us achieve so much in 2019.

Our main funders 2018/19:

Allen & Overy Foundation
Attlee Foundation
BBC-Children in Need
British Red Cross
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Tampon Tax Community Fund
East End CAB
Feminist Review
Greater London Authority
Henry Smith Foundation
Institute of Strategic Development
Kind UK
LB Hackney
LB Newham
LB Tower Hamlets
London Legal Support Trust
Metropolitan H A (Migration Foundation)
Oak Foundation
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Pilgrims Trust
Souter Trust
St Martin in the Fields Frontline Network
St Mungo's
The Guardian & The Observer Charity Appeal
The National Lottery Community Fund
Tower Hamlets GP Care Group CIC
Tudor Trust
29th May 1961

Special thanks to partners and supporters:

Allen & Overy
Anchor House
ATLEU
Babel's Blessing
British Red Cross
Commonweal Housing
Crisis
Croydon Quaker Meeting House
Deighton Pierce Glynn
Doctors of the World
Duncan Lewis Solicitors
East End CAB
Fadiga & Co
Federico Rivas
Free Movement
Garden Court Chambers
GrowTH
Hackney Migrants' Centre
Homeless Link
Hosts with Refugees at Home and Rooms for Refugees
Housing Justice
IKRWO
iMix
Islington Law Centre
John Daghlian
Kazzum
London Catholic Workers
Media Trust
Members of Praxis groups
Milton Damerel Trust
NACCOM
On Road Media
Ourmala
Pan Intercultural Arts
Praxis Service User Forum and Service User Representatives
Project 17
Public Interest Law Centre
Ramfel
Refugee Action
Relief Creche Care
Rights of Women
Signature Law
St Martin-in-the-fields Charity
St Mungo's
The Connection at St Martin's
The Guardian & The Observer
The Magpie Project
The National Theatre and Helen Edmundson
Timebank UK
Together with Migrant Children
TH Community Advice Network
United Reform Church
Unity Project
Wendy Quill
Women's Environmental Network

Thanks to all those who donated to Praxis and to The Guardian & The Observer's Charity Appeal 2018; to those who donated Christmas gifts for Praxis' children and to all our incredible volunteers for their time and skills.

Trustees of the charity since 1st April 2018:

Barbara Roche, Chair
Pasha Michaelsen, Vice Chair
David Carrigan
(until September 2018)
Nick Pilkington
(until September 2018)
Tony Wright
(until November 2018)
Elijah Sambo
Jumana Rahman
Colin Cormack
(until July 2019)

Raphael Perret, Treasurer
Martin Cosarinsky
Dylan Matthews
(since January 2018)
Shashi Giblin
(since July 2019)
Connie Cullen
(since July 2019)
Tom Brand
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