

## Autumn/Winter 2024

# GREC Bulletin

GREC's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary | Research updates: Migrants Facing Financial Disadvantage Report | Active Citizens Project kicks off in Aberdeenshire | Language Cafes - Progress and Expansion | Transition to E-Visa System | Save the Dates

### Editor's Note

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter edition of the GREC Community Bulletin!

This edition covers the launch events to mark GREC's 40th Anniversary, the publication of partnership research with Migration Policy Scotland on financial disadvantage for migrant households, GREC's Active Citizens Programme's first session, the expansion of language cafés, and E-Visa updates.

If you have any questions about our projects and services, please contact us via the details opposite or follow the link to [our website](#). The GREC team looks forward to seeing you. Thanks for reading!

### Contacts

#### General Enquiries:

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Interpreting & translation services with special rates for the third sector.

#### Training: [training@grec.co.uk](mailto:training@grec.co.uk) 01224 576795

Training and consultancy packages, tailored to client's needs.

#### Casework: [casework@grec.co.uk](mailto:casework@grec.co.uk) 07857 180175

Confidential advice, support & financial inclusion service.

#### Counselling: [counselling@grec.co.uk](mailto:counselling@grec.co.uk)

Confidential counselling for adults, children and young people.

#### Language & Integration:

[language-cafe@grec.co.uk](mailto:language-cafe@grec.co.uk) 01224 576797

Free Language Café sessions to practice English.

## GREC's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - A Big Thank You to Everyone

GREC celebrated the launch of a series of events to recognise our 40th anniversary with two events held at the University of Aberdeen Library on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

We were joined by over a 100 people to mark the occasion, including community members, volunteers, Cafetistas, GREC members, friends and supporters of our work.

A special thanks to our panel members, Barney Crockett, Ibidun Daramola, Jeannie Felsing, Zuzana Jatelova, Philip Muinde, Tuck-Chee Phung, and Hector Williams, who joined us to reflect on past achievements and current challenges to advance equality in Grampian and beyond.

The GREC choir, a collaboration between staff, volunteers and Cafetistas, also made its debut singing a selection of songs that inspired everyone, including "Banahaa", "Give Me Wings", "True Colours" and "Imagine".

***"Congratulations to GREC on 40 years of empowering communities and making a lasting impact – Here's to many more years of meaningful work"***



Research updates:

## "Open The Door, Migrants Facing Financial Disadvantage and Their Needs for Support"

Migration Policy Scotland together with GREC and other partner organisations recently published research that shows that migrants in Scotland and their families often experience significant financial hardship and their needs are often overlooked or treated as niche by Scotland's support pathways for poverty reduction.

This research is based on interviews and focus groups with 60 migrants and 18 public and third sector support organisations across all of Scotland, including Aberdeen and the North East. It includes an overview of migrants' experiences and recommendations for the Scottish Government, local authorities, employability services and employers to improve existing support.

You can check out the full report here: [Migrants Financial Disadvantage and Needs for Support](#)

## Active Citizens Project Kicks Off in Aberdeenshire

After months of planning, we're excited to announce the launch of the Active Citizens Programme in Aberdeenshire. It began in early October with a lively first session involving a group of Ukrainian people resettled in the area.

During the first session, we began co-designing the journey with participants, who were enthusiastic about the range of topics to explore until December. GREC facilitates this programme to cover all aspects of becoming an active member of the community and with co-design at its core.

Participants will explore everything from Aberdeenshire's cultural heritage and local services to their rights, responsibilities, and ways to engage in the community. For more information, contact: nmorrison@grec.co.uk



## Transition To E-Visa System by The End Of 2024

Biometric Residence Permit cards are expiring on 31st December 2024, as the UK Government moves towards an E-Visa system.

It's important that people complete the E-Visa process before 31st December. GREC's Casework project is happy to help, and Citizen's Advice Scotland and EU Citizens Rights Project have both received UK Government funds to provide support.

## Language Cafes - Progress and Expansion

GREC's Language and Integration Team is actively promoting networking activities to help language cafés across the country connect and share best practices. After an initial meeting in Dundee, welcoming over 30 people from all over Scotland, two additional online meetings followed, shaping what may become an important network to raise visibility and awareness about these valuable sources of support.

Language cafés vary in format, but all rely on enthusiastic and dedicated people. Some cafés meet monthly, others weekly, and they provide a vital source of information and friendship for New Scots. While some language cafés are part of ESOL programmes, offering additional support for English learners, they also serve as spaces for social interaction, friendship, and cultural exchange among participants.

GREC's Drop-in and Language Café in Aberdeen continues to thrive, uniquely incorporating creative practitioners who use storytelling and movement to boost self-confidence and resilience.

Anna Fancett, who has led storytelling at the Language Café, will present her experiences at the upcoming Scottish International Storytelling Festival in Edinburgh. <https://shorturl.at/5sOX2>

## Save The Dates

- Scottish Parliament 25th Anniversary, regional event, Aberdeen - 4<sup>th</sup> November (hosted by GREC).
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Reclaim the Night March - 25<sup>th</sup> November, 6pm.
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, Women's Health & Wellbeing Fair - 26<sup>th</sup> November.
- GREC's AGM - 13<sup>th</sup> November, 5pm.