

Supporting the successful integration of all migrants, refugees, BME community members and groups in Essex and Hertfordshire

New in Harlow!

Integration Supports Services is pleased to announce the opening of their free Internet community café.

Located at 2 Wych Elm, Harlow (next to the NHS centre and ambulance station) the café is open on Saturdays between 11 am and 2 pm. This is an initiative to help members of all communities as well as new comers to Harlow to access local information and also use the services for their progress. Since its opening in February, the café has found many users.

Besides the use of free internet and help with using computers other services are also offered. The staff can provide assistance with filling applications, guidance on improving your qualifications and CV writing. Advice on services and opportunities in the local area and landlord and employer disputes will also be available.

Food and drinks are sold at an affordable price. The internet café is also a good place to meet up and make new friends.

Noor Saba Shameel

Inside: An IT Volunteer shares what it means to him to work in the Internet Community Café, see page 5



All are welcome



Introducing ISS new Chair

As a relative newcomer to Essex, without family and friends I found the experience isolating to say the least and spent the best part of the first year driving up and down the motorway at the weekends to Yorkshire to be surrounded by the warmth and familiarity of my family and friends. This is not possible for the people we support at ISS.

The role we play in supporting, offering advice and guidance and providing volunteering opportunities is invaluable in aiding those new to the country not only to integrate successfully but to contribute their skills, knowledge and expertise in the overall development of the community. I am, therefore, delighted to take up the role as the chair of ISS. There will no doubt be many challenges, particularly in these times of financial constraints, however it is a challenge that I am looking forward to meeting with the support of the board, staff and volunteers.

Doreen Sangster



Better support for victims of domestic violence

On 10 March the Home Secretary announced overseas spouses and partners of United Kingdom residents who are forced to flee their relationships as a result of domestic violence will be able to access vital support services.

At present, some feel they have to stay in abusive relationships because they are in the United Kingdom on a spousal visa and have 'no recourse to public funds', meaning that they cannot access support services during the 2-year probationary period before they can apply for settlement.

Following a successful pilot project, these victims will be able to access services to ensure that they do not need to remain in violent relationships. Access to these services will be for a strictly limited period while the victim gathers evidence and makes a claim for residence based on the domestic violence, and while the UK Border Agency considers the application.

Government outlines overhaul of student visas

Tougher entrance criteria, limits on work entitlements and the closure of the post-study work route are among the changes to the student visa system announced on 21st of march by Home Secretary Theresa May.

The main changes are as follows:

From April 2012, any institution wanting to sponsor students will need to be classed as a Highly Trusted sponsor, and will need to become accredited by a statutory education inspection body by the end of 2012. The current system does not require this, and has allowed too many poor-quality colleges to become sponsors.

Students coming to study at degree level will need to speak English at an 'upper intermediate' (B2) level, rather than the current 'lower intermediate' (B1) requirement.

UK Border Agency staff will be able to refuse entry to students who cannot speak English without an interpreter, and who therefore clearly do not meet the minimum standard.

Students at universities and publicly funded further education colleges will retain their current work rights, but all other students will have no right to work. We will place restrictions on work placements in courses outside universities.

Only postgraduate students at universities and government-sponsored students will be able to bring their dependants. At the moment, all students on longer courses can bring their dependants.

Home Office will limit the overall time that can be spent on

a student visa to 3 years at lower levels (as it is now) and 5 years at higher levels. At present, there is no time limit for study at or above degree level.

Home Office will close the Tier 1 (Post-study work) route, which allows students 2 years to seek employment after their course ends. Only graduates who have an offer of a skilled job from a sponsoring employer under Tier 2 of the points-based system will be able to stay to work.

More information at; www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

A New Criminality Threshold announced

Applicants must now be clear of unspent convictions when they apply for settlement.

ID card Database

A database built to hold the fingerprints and personal details of millions of ID card holders was publicly destroyed on 10 February 2011. People can no longer use the cards to prove their identity or to travel in Europe. The scheme was scrapped by the coalition government and the cards ceased to be valid legal documents on 22 January 2011.

If you have any questions about issues raised in this newsletter, please contact us on telephone number: 01279 639442

BANK HOLIDAYS IN THE UK THIS YEAR

Handy advance planner

22 April is Good Friday and a bank holiday

25 April is bank holiday so no Epping drop in/ISS closed

29 April special bank holiday for the royal wedding - ISS closed

2 May bank holiday and no Epping drop in/ISS closed

30 May bank holiday and no Epping Drop in/ISS closed

29 August bank holiday and no Epping drop in/ISS closed

Sorry!

23rd and 30th April Loughton Saturday club will be closed

IMPORTANT

Integration Support Services have now made it much easier for you to contact us by changing our email addresses and website address to be much briefer and easier to remember.

**To write to us simply type in: info@iss.org.uk
and to visit our website enter: <http://www.iss.org.uk> in the address bar**

**Please do not use the older and longer version of our email/website address
as very soon it will cease to operate**

End of WRS

On 1 May 2011 the Workers Registration Scheme for nationals of the Accession 8(A8) countries will end. Nationals of the eight countries that joined the European Union in 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) will have a right to reside as jobseekers and access income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

This means that A8 nationals will have the same rights to benefits as other EEA nationals ('old member state' nationals). Restrictions for A2 nationals (Romanians and Bulgarians) accessing the labour market and out-of-work benefits, will remain in place until at least January 2012 and possibly until December 2013.

Beyond May 2011, A8 nationals will be able to access benefits whilst they seek work in the UK for up to six months and beyond that if they can demonstrate they have a genuine chance of gaining employment, but not housing or homelessness assistance.

Whilst in work, they can access all benefits and do not need to be registered to work. In some circumstances, A8 nationals will be able to access benefits when they are temporarily unable to work, for example if they have become ill or had an accident. Additionally, family members of A8 nationals such as spouses and dependent children will also be able to access benefits, even if they are not EEA nationals themselves.

Annual limit on economic migration to the UK comes into force 6 April 2011

The number of people permitted to enter the UK from outside the EU is limited to 20,700 per annum under the skilled worker route (except for those earning a salary of more than £150,000 or in-country applications from those in the UK), and 1,000 per annum under the new exceptional talent route. Employers will be required to apply for a certificate of sponsorship for a specific post if they wish to bring someone to the UK. Tier 2 (general) is open only to migrants performing jobs at graduate level and tier 1 is restricted to all but entrepreneurs, investors and the exceptionally talented.

The minimum salary for individuals who wish to enter the UK under the intra-company transfer route for more than 12 months is £40,000 but there is no limit on the number of migrants in this category.

Abolition of the Certificate of Approval Scheme

On 6 April 2011 Parliament approved the Remedial Order that will abolish the certificate of approval scheme. This means the scheme will end on 9 May 2011.

Volunteers Needed

Do you have a passion to work with the community? Do you want to gain experience and new skills, do you want to share your knowledge and expertise with others?

We offer the following opportunities to run our services in Harlow, Epping Forest, East Herts: Interpreters, translators, advocacy, IT support, play workers, catering, admin and many other opportunities

Please do give us a call on 01279 639442 for an informal chat. We would be very happy to explain the benefits of becoming a volunteer for ISS in more details .





Volunteer Zeynep's happy news

We were delighted with the news that our Admin volunteer Zeynep had safely given birth. Zeynep visited the ISS office with baby and said "two months ago when I happily became a mother it was the best time of my life. I enjoy motherhood together with my voluntary work for ISS"

Left: Ready to welcome Zeynep was Doreen Sangster, ISS Chair, Mimoza Matoshi CEO, Marlene Brooks Administrator

Budget 2011 How does it affect you?

There is a lot rumors going on about new government budget, but not all of them will affect us negatively. We want to give you some details of what was announced in the 2011



Budget and how the Budget may affect you. Mr Osborne said that the current "complex" system of means-tested working age benefits and tax credits would gradually be replaced by a universal credit that would "sharpen" work incentives and reduce fraud and error.

We would like to make you familiar with some changes. From next year, couples with children must work at least 24 hours a week between them in order to be eligible for working tax credit.

Child Tax Credit for lower income families will increase by £255

Amongst other payments, the weekly rates for statutory maternity, paternity and adoption pay and maternity allowance will increase to £128.73; and statutory sick pay will increase to £81.60.

Relating to housing in Budget 2011 was the introduction of a £250 million scheme to help first-time buyers onto the property ladder.

The government announced a package of reforms to Housing Benefit to be introduced from April 2011 onwards. If you live in private rented accommodation and claim Hous-

ing Benefit, the rates for Local Housing allowance (LHA) will be reduced from April 2011. The Local Housing Allowance is used to work out how much Housing Benefit you get. These changes introduce limits on the LHA depending on the number of rooms in your property.

The TV licence fee is to be frozen for six years at £145.50, Child benefit will be cut for families with a higher rate taxpayer from January 2013. If both parents earn less than £44,000 a year, they will continue to receive Child benefit. But families with one main earner on more than £44,000 will see their benefit stopped.

Employment and Support Allowance is a payment to people whose ability to work is limited by disability or illness, and is replacing incapacity benefit.

Payment will be limited to one year for those who are able to do some work and whose payment is based on their National Insurance contributions

Note

This information is intended to be a guide and does not cover every circumstance. It is possible that some of the information is over-simplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law. We made every effort to ensure that the information is correct at time of publication.

If you have any further questions please ring our office on 01279 639442

Women’s Group Loughton

Between October 2010 and March 2011 ISS in partnership with True Stars Children Centre and West Essex PCT had a monthly meeting for ladies from different background.

The Women’s Group has been a great opportunity for BME ladies from Chigwell to get together and integrate with native English speakers. It is very hard to overcome language and cultural barriers and this group was set up to help build a better understanding between communities, for individuals to build links and self esteem. Our aim was to educate our clients on issues which affect their day to day life. In the Women’s Group in March we had a guest speaker from Rethink, a mental health charity. Other topics which we covered in the last months were parenting methods, feeding children under five and multicultural awareness.



ISS would like to thank all the ladies who made an effort to come and shared experiences and also learn new things.

Sharing skills as a Volunteer

Wellington shares what it means for him to be an ISS volunteer



I started volunteering when I was fourteen and the thrill and buzz that comes with it has never left me. There is a sense of satisfaction in giving back to the community.

If everyone in the community dedicated a fraction of their precious time to give a hand, the world would not be such a painful place for millions of people. The United Kingdom is a country with a system that keeps you busy from morning to dawn and the living expenses are fairly dear. In other words, it is an unimaginable aspect to think of dedicating your time to unpaid work. However, take my word for it –it’s worth every minute.

For most people it is not easy to settle in a new country. There is a lot to learn about the culture and system. I would have integrated into the British culture more easily if I had received guidance such as offered by ISS. It is for this reason that I was attracted to the idea of volunteering with ISS. The idea of bridging the gap between migrants and the Indigenous British people attracted me. Also, as a migrant I can relate to the clientele.

I support people with basic computer skills that includes: using the Internet and applications such as Microsoft word. The other aspect is to encourage interaction amongst people of all backgrounds referring those who need advice to various departments of ISS. In return I am boosting my CV, gaining more experience in people skills and using this as a platform for my future projects.

Wellington KP
ISS Voluntary Support Worker

Supporting the successful integration of all migrants, refugees, BME community members and groups in Essex & Hertfordshire

FREE INTERNET

integration support services

FOOD & DRINKS

Come and meet new friends

at the

internet community café

LOTTERY FUNDED

We offer free:

Help using computers

Support with CV writing

Advice on improving your qualifications

Advice on employers & landlords disputes

LOTTERY FUNDED

Join us every Saturday 11am to 2 pm

Telephone: 639442 Email: info@iss.org.uk

How to find us:

2 Wych Elm, Harlow CM 20 1QP

Next to the NHS Walk in Centre

Integration Support Services
 Registered Charity NO. 1120609
 Limited by Guarantee No: 6308078
 website: <http://www.iss.org.uk>

Culture Corner

St. George's Day – 23 April 2011

St. George is the patron saint of England. This day is celebrated to remember the bravery, gallantry and honour of Saint George. Saint George's day is also regarded as England's national day. His emblem – a red cross on a white background is the flag of England and part of the British flag, thus demonstrating his significance in English/British history.

May Day – 1 May 2011

May Day is celebrated in many countries on 1 May. It is also known as International Workers' Day or Labour Day. It is the celebration of social and economic achievements of the labour movement. Traditional British May day celebrations include dancing around a May pole and choosing a May queen. It also marks the beginning of spring. May day is a public holiday.

Father's Day- 19 June 2011

Celebrated on the third Sunday of June, Father's day celebrates and honours fathers. It's a day when children show appreciation to their fathers. Like mother's day, father's day is personal and family-oriented. Gifts and cards are given to show how special fathers are.

Further festival dates can be found online at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>

29 April Royal Wedding

We are not sure how Prince William proposed to Kate Middleton, but certainly on Friday, 29th April there will be clergymen and bridesmaids in abundance to share in their marriage at Westminster Abbey. Archbishops, bishops, abbey clergy, royalty and guests will be there to witness the couple promising their lives to each other, and millions around the world will be watching the occasion on television.



When the Queen married Prince Philip in November 1947, they left the Abbey to the traditional music of Mendelssohn's Wedding March. In recent years that final music has been Widor's Toccata. It was played for the weddings of Princess Anne and Mark Phillips in 1973, Prince Charles and Diana in 1981, and Prince Edward and Sophie in 1999. The word 'toccata' means to touch, and it is usually a virtuoso work that shows off the gifts of the player as he or she touches the keys of the organ and creates dazzling music. Charles-Marie Widor was born into a family of organ builders. He became the organist at the prestigious church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris for 64 years until his death in 1933. He composed ten symphonies for the instrument that marked a new stage in French organ music showing how it could be almost orchestral in its sounds and sonorities.

The fingers move on the manuals like exultant birds in flight, and after a page and a half of this glittering playing, the pedals sound out a majestic melody. The brightness and the excitement seem to fade away and then a powerful crescendo leads into the final pages when we hear the melody played in octaves on the pedal board. The work ends with four chords that ring out from the instrument.

As wedding music, the Toccata reflects the splendour and joy of the marriage service. The couple enter as man and woman; they leave as husband and wife. Widor's music conveys this special occasion in music of great beauty and brilliance.

Who knows? – it may be heard again on the 29th April. Whatever final music Prince William and Kate choose, our thoughts, and our good wishes are with them on this special day in their lives.

The British Red Cross

On 29 March, the British Red Cross started a monthly casework service for asylum seekers and refugees referred to them by the Integration Support Service.

Casework takes place at the British Red Cross centre in Chelmsford, runs from 9.30 am to 3 pm, and is by appointment only. The next session will take place on Tuesday 26 April.

The British Red Cross does not provide immigration advice, but is able to assist clients with, among others, the following issues:

NASS or Section 4 applications
Finding or liaising with a legal representative
Updates from the UK Border Agency.

The British Red Cross also provides an International Tracing and Message Service.

This service aims to restore or maintain contact between family members separated due to conflict, political upheaval, natural disaster or migration.

Please contact Amber Stechman for further information:
AStechman@redcross.org.uk Tel:ephone: 01582 589 085

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integration support services

Have you studied in another country?
Make the best of your Qualification!

A new service we can offer to help you to improve your employment prospects

ISS can provide a free qualification comparison service to migrant workers who are in employment, either from EU countries or with leave to remain status.

Qualification Comparison

For appointment please contact Integration Support Service at 01279 639442

Basra by Wellington KP

The door was wide open
but I waited for the signal...
The timing had to be right ...

Sweat ran on my face;
a mist blurred my vision...

I saw his hand go up
and knew that it was time...
There was no turning back;
death was right in my nostrils...
For a moment my heart froze,
as I felt the AK 47 rattling

in my hands...

I knew what we were up against...
I was the first one in
then one other... and another...
Within seconds,
the old shack over whelmed
with hand grenades, machine guns,
rifles, shoulder launched missiles
all ready to cause destruction...
The dirty little shack smelt of blood...

and death...

I moved in slowly for a clearer view
not even a rat could escape...
I moved further into another room...
I saw something move-
from the corner of my eye..
I heard a sound squeak from behind...
I turned around swiftly
and fired, I missed!
For once, I missed!

Thank God, I missed...

She was at least six;
she did not utter a word,
she just stood there with,
her large brown eyes wide open...
Tears trickled down her rosy cheeks...
She held tightly in her arms
a one eyed old teddy bear

My eyes turned into a well...

Her face was pale and
partly covered with soot
I was shivering;
I dropped on my knees,
Looked up to heavens
then sat against the wall
and lit up a cigarette
For a moment

I had died inside...

integration
support
services



**CABLESHEER
GROUP**



SureStart east POTENTIAL



FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

ESOL CLASSES

We are pleased to announce that funding has been extended to enable us to continue to bring you further ESOL classes. Please ring our office if you would like to attend. Our photo shows clients eagerly learning and getting to know each other and experience real integration with each other.



Can you be a Trustee for ISS?

Rewarding Voluntary Position - Expenses paid

As part of our expansion we are looking to appoint new trustees to our board who will bring us their skills in one or more of the following areas: public relations, marketing, fundraising, advocacy.

You would attend at least one Management Committee Meetings per month lasting around two hours, one AGM, and one Away Day.

For further information, or to apply please email: info@iss.org.uk.
Alternatively you can find out more about us on www.iss.org.uk

Epping Forest District Neighbourhood Day

On the 5 March 2011 the Essex Watch and Neighbourhood Watch got together with local voluntary organisations mostly within Epping and neighbouring towns for a free family event. This was done in collaboration with Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Essex County Council, Epping Forest District Council, and West Essex Primary Care Trust including some local businesses. ISS was invited to take part in this event giving us a platform to explore how our mission fits in with what other partners have to offer to the Essex community. By 10 am Epping Hall was packed with lively individuals who gave advice on various matters that included keeping the community safe and encouraging participation from residents. Partners socialised, shared ideas over a cup of tea. The organiser, Colin Freeman, who is the Essex Watch Administrator, ensured that all partners were able take part in the event comfortably.



do not come to the UK because they are poor but it can be a mere career move. A number of people had the opinion that the problem was with migrants keeping to themselves, refusing to learn English and breaking the law. This perspective has resulted in some parts of the migrant community being isolated.

As an ISS representative the objective was to highlight that integration needs participants. In other words, all parties have to be willing to take the first step and accommodate the other. The local British people need to be educated on this matter as much as the migrants have to be enlightened on the way the system works without assuming hostility. As such, the whole idea of family clubs should not only target migrants but should have the locals as well in order to build a relationship between them. Although, there were not many migrants that came to the event ISS was able to capitalise on recruiting local British volunteers, of which a few of the participants actually confirmed that they would contact our organisation regarding the matter.

Wellington KP ISS Voluntary Support Worker



This was an appropriate chance for ISS as a voluntary organisation to present its purpose. A few of the people who enquired about ISS had heard about it. Nevertheless, most of the people were hearing about it for the first time. Initially, there was a perception that ISS was in the wrong place because there are not that many migrants in Epping. However, most of the individuals became more enthusiastic when they realise that the main objective was to creating an understanding between local communities and migrants with the idea of spreading it across Essex. There is still a long way in educating the local indigenous communities, as there is the tendency to label the migrant or refugee as the other. All migrants do not come from Iraq or Ghana but may come from Sweden or Australia as well. In other words, all people

Maybury Open Door
Volunteers Needed
In June
 To help in their adult drop-in centre every
FRIDAY
 At the Maybury Open Door
 St Pauls Church hall
 (next to the Playhouse)
 A meeting place for adults
 Either 11am to 1pm or 1pm to 4pm
 (other times may be possible)
 To help in the kitchen serving light refreshments as part of our team
 Please contact our office for more details
 01279 639442

If you feel a need to discuss any problems you may have, please contact us on 01279 639442
We are here to help



Easter fun with ISS



Competition time for the children

during the Easter holidays we will be having fun things happening and for sure you will be having fun at home too so we would like you to draw a picture for us about something exciting that you have seen or you have done in the holidays. It might be a big Easter egg you found in the garden, or it could be fun at the zoo, or St George and his dragon at the museum. Whatever your ideas we want to see them.

Charity No: 1120609
 Company Limited by Guarantee No: 6308078
 Tel: 01279 639442
 info@iss.org.uk
 http://www.iss.org.uk

**integration
support
services**

Easter Activities

EVENT	WHEN	TICKET PRICE
<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Trip to Paradise Wildlife Park Broxborne</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">UK's most interactive zoo. Plenty of animals and adventure play areas. Perfect for a great family outing</p>	Saturday 16 April 2011 10.30am -4.00pm We will meet at The Tree House Children's Centre Harlow CM18 7NG	£4 per person Children under 2 free
<p style="color: orange; font-weight: bold;">Easter /St George's Day</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Trip to Museum of Harlow Lots of activities for the family hunt for Easter egg pictures, art and craft</p>	Saturday 23 April 2011 We will meet at The Tree House Children's Centre Harlow CM18 7NG	£1 per child

For bookings please contact 01279 639442 or speak to a staff member.

Parent/carers are responsible for their children during trips/ events!

There will be prizes for different age groups:

The 3 categories are:

Under 3 years of age

Between 5 and 7 years

Over 7 years

Please post your entries **before**

1 June to:

ISS
 2 Wych Elm
 Harlow
 Essex
 CM20 1QP



We will also print the very best pictures in our next newsletter.
 Have fun!

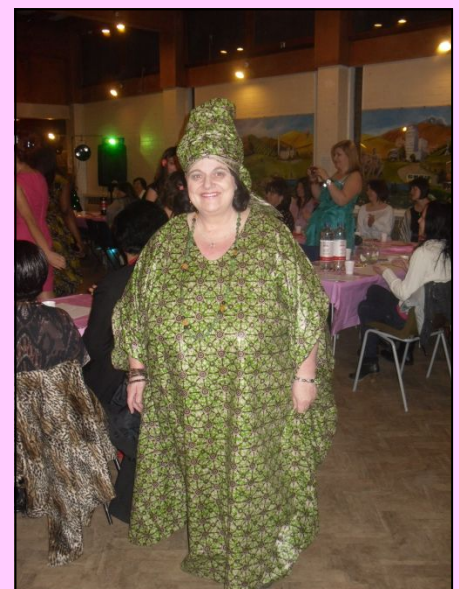
ISS CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY!

To commemorate 100 years of International Women’s day, Integration Support Services (ISS) organized a gala evening on Saturday, 12 March 2011 at St. Paul’s Church Hall, Harlow. It was an event of celebration and inspiration.

Mimoza Matoshi, CEO of ISS said, ‘this event is a tribute to women and celebration of our strength and resilience’. Harlow MP Robert Halfon dropped by and expressed his appreciation of women’s achievements. He spoke of the challenging roles that women take on and its relevance. Speaking on ISS, Robert Halfon supported the cause of ISS’s work in bringing people of different cultures together and stressed of its importance in creating a cohesive society.



It was an exciting evening of games, music, dance and food. The 80 ladies who attended were treated to free manicures, fashion parade, a riveting bollywood dance performance and multi-cultural music. They joined in with their dancing and had a great time. Guest speakers Mrs. Gurdish Sandhu and Mrs. Bukola Durojaiye spoke of their experiences and inspired the ladies to work hard to achieve their goals. Harlow Council and COVER joined ISS as partners and along with the help of ISS staff and volunteers made this event possible.



SCHEDULE MAY/JUNE/JULY 2011

ACTIVITY	VENUE	Day/Time
Outreach/Support Consultation and advice	Harlow and Epping area	Monday to Saturday By appointment, please ring our office or direct to Joanna 07775 955982
Saturday activities for families with Children <i>(Coming soon Summer activities see our leaflet)</i>	Treehouse Children's Centre Staple Tye Harlow CM18 7NG	Saturdays 10.30 am—2.30 am
Saturday activities for families with Children <i>(Coming soon Summer activities see our leaflet)</i>	Sunrise Children's Centre Loughton IG10 3HE	1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Satur- days 10 am—1 pm 4th Saturday (ONLY) 1 pm—4 pm (NO MORNING SESSION)
Internet Community Cafe	2 Wych Elm (follow the sign for Quigy's café) CM20 1QP	11 am—2 pm
Drop in sessions	Harlow Office 2 Wych Elm Harlow CM20 1QT	Thursdays 10 am—2 pm
Drop in sessions	Limes Farm Children Centre Community Hall IG7 5NT	Please contact Joanna for details 07775 955982
ESOL Classes (FREE BUT BOOK) For beginners to learn and improve English Crechè available		Please contact our office for more details
Women's Group		Please contact our office for more details

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Telephone: 01279 639442
E-mail: info@iss.org.uk
Website: <http://www.iss.org.uk>
*We are a registered charity No. 1120609
Company limited by Guarantee
No. 6308078*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are very grateful to
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valued help in the
production of this
newsletter.

