#### YOUNG MIGRANTS SPEAKING OPENLY AND WITHOUT FEAR



#### WORDS APART PASSPORT

WELCOME TO WORDS APART.

PLEASE KEEP YOUR PASSPORT WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.

DO NOT LEAVE THE COUNTRY UNLESS YOU ARE TOLD.

> YOU HAVE NO FREEDOM.

#### I AM PHENOMENAL

When I enter the room Heads turn in appreciation Everybody goes WOW Because I am making it a brighter future I own it, I am a boss I am phenomenal

When I enter the room, people smile Everybody knows because of my son A proud mum, sister, auntie I own it, I am a boss I am phenomenal

I have a great style Because I have a nice lifestyle My body looks good So I feel confident I own it, I am a boss I am phenomenal I shine with this kind heart And though my voice screams of fatigue I still fly amongst the clouds Shine with the stars Blaze bright next to the sun I own it, I am a boss

Resilience, Patience It's in my heart for peace It's in my tongue to say I am an amazing grace I am phenomenal



#### WHO AM I?

A story complex as a skyline Spinning round my face like the London Eye Stomach churning A raging ocean Eyes sharp as an urban fox Heart of gold like a defibrillator Standing tall for justice Roaring like a lion Fist like iron Demeanour like a flowing river A voice of encouragement With this expression of fearlessness This tongue from the leaders of fables lost With a brain like a worker ant A brain like Einstein Bones of Adamantium Ox-strength Standing tall A fighter for justice With a posture of hope A mind as certain as the rising sun As awesome as me.

# WHO IS THIS POEM FOR?

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 Waking up at 9am, to earn, to survive For people who tolerate, stand, bear each other For people living alone Searching for a way to make a better world For people who see me as more than a percentage Who believe in themselves Who have found love Amongst the jail of death and life Who hold on to that last glimmer of hope For people who care for my story And for people who can't write it down

## COS BREXIT'S ON THE NEWS

woke up in the morning put the TV on and Brexit's on the news

drinking morning coffee hearing people talking saying Brexit's on the news

Kevin wants to to talk about the football, time gone by but Brexit's on the news

can't afford my bills standing in a queue, still waiting but Brexit's on the news

scrolling for a job filling out a form but Brexit's on the news

waiting for a bus open up a paper Brexit's on the news famine, poverty across the world knife crime on the rise, cuts in disguise but Brexit's on the news

now I'm homeless a tear in my sleeping bag but Brexit's on the news

I haven't eaten in two days I can't raise my voice Brexit's on the news

I'd slit my wrist but no one would notice cos Brexit's on the news



## **RULES FOR A MIGRANT**

#### Wait

until we make the decision You have nothing to do until who knows when? Work only when allowed to Or not at all until we decide your status

We restrict your right to be

We are helping you Do not work You are only a place

You don't have a decision of your own self

You want to explore the world? You have no right to travel

We are working on your case

You're fit and able but should just sit And do nothing

Do not collect what you are entitled to

Do not collect universal credit Report yourself,



#### show your ID every week to us

You do not know how long you will wait Do nothing

Follow the policy Do not question us No right to remain

Can't go elsewhere No right to remain Assimilate. But you can't be one of us

GO BACK HOME

When you die we will shed tears for how we treated you We will make no changes

We will rob your children of their own home Do not leave the country unless you are told

You have no freedom

Don't say you don't fit the profile This is United Kingdom Land of the free



### (HUMAN RIGHT) (BROKE THE LAW)

when I left my home (human right)

made some decisions, joined a group (broke the law)

cried for help (human right) but no one came

lost two babies, tried to save one (human right)

denied help (human right) or healthcare (human right) (broke the law)

sought refuge, got misinterpreted, no help came (human right) got striped of citizenship, no help came

they make the law (broke the law)

This collection of poems has been collaboratively written by members of Brighter Futures, as part of a series of workshops exploring how poetry can act as a tool for social change and can give voice to those silenced in public and political discourse. The poems provide an insight into the lives of young people on the sharp end of hostile immigration policy – and give control and agency over how their experiences are told, and by who.

The group were inspired by the work of BAME poets from migrant backgrounds including Gil Scott-Heron, Jose Olivarez, Jonathan Edwards and Maya Angelou and created their original work in collaboration with poet and current Jerwood/Arvon mentee Arji Manuelpillai.

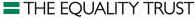
<sup>'</sup>Words Apart' was a free evening of art, poetry and discussion hosted by Brighter Futures at the Ecology Pavilion, Mile End on Tuesday 19th November 2019.

An exhibition of artwork, inspired by this collection of poems, was created for the event. This artwork was developed through a series of workshops with Brighter Futures members, in collaboration with artist and graphic designer Kathryn Corlett. Brighter Futures are a group of young people who work together to speak up for young migrants and their rights, using creativity as a tool to challenge negative perceptions of migration in the UK.

A collaborative project led by Praxis Community Projects and Kazzum Arts, Words Apart is brought to you by Brighter Futures with the support of Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Equality Trust.









www.brighterfutureslondon.co.uk