**Woman B story**

B is 27 and from Bolivia. She arrived in the UK 6 years ago at her parents request after being part of an activist group. After political unrest and feeling threatened by the opposition, the Bolivian government issued arrest warrants to everyone who was a part of activist groups. B intended to stay in the UK temporarily. Her sister already lived in the North East and her parents thought it would be better for her to leave the country and let the political situation settle in Bolivia before returning.

Whilst living in London she made friends through going to church, where she also met a family who let her stay with them in return for being an au pair. However, 3­4 months after arriving in the UK she discovered she was 3 months pregnant. She felt ashamed of herself and didn't feel she could stay with her sister. The family she was living with agreed she could stay with them.

One of the biggest concerns during her pregnancy was whether or not she would have to go back to Bolivia. B was worried about going back with the baby as she had an arrest warrant. The consequences of returning with an arrest warrant would have meant that B and the baby would have gone to prison. Whilst explaining these concerns, someone from the church told her about claiming asylum. B had never heard of claiming asylum, but decided it was her best option.

Her first claim for asylum was made 5 years ago. She has been refused asylum numerous times. She has been detained and gone to high court to appeal but is still waiting for the decision to be made as to where her future lies. She has been refused because they believe she could relocate to another area within Bolivia, despite her arrest warrant being valid across the whole country.

During B’s pregnancy her friend accompanied her to the doctors and to the hospital. She didn't speak English at the time so needed someone to translate for her. Being 3 months pregnant already, the doctor sent her for a scan straight away, and asked her to come back after 6 weeks. For some unknown reason B was never given a midwife to guide her through the pregnancy. B says she had never heard of a midwife so didn't expect one. The pregnancy was straight forward and B says that she just got on with her work.

Unfortunately B has quite traumatic memories of the birth itself. She thinks it's partly due to the fact she didn't really understand what was going on throughout her birth. She started having contractions whilst working and felt too worried to tell the family that she was in labour. Her contractions started in the morning and continued into the evening until 9pm. She told the family she was in labour and went to the hospital on the Monday evening. She eventually gave birth to her daughter on Thursday, staying in hospital for a total of 4 nights. She had friends who came to see her for a couple of hours at a time just to make sure she was ok. Her lack of English meant that she couldn't really communicate with the hospital staff.

During the labour the baby had turned and it was thought B may need a Caesarean section, which she consented to. Just as B was about to be taken down to the operating theatre another midwife came into the room. The midwife squeezed and pushed on the baby to turn her around.

When baby B was born she wasn't breathing. This was frightening for B as she didn't really know what was happening. B was then encouraged to push the placenta out, but she didn't know what this was, and again didn't really understand what she was supposed to be doing.

The family she was an au pair for were happy for her to stay whilst she was pregnant and after. However, when her daughter was a couple of months old it was felt that the arrangement wasn't working too well. After she claimed asylum, she left the family's home and was moved north and stayed in an initial accommodation centre (IAC). She found her time there quite difficult as her English wasn’t yet fluent. At the time the majority of the people in the IAC were African, and B felt quite isolated. Another situation B remembers well was being given 3­4 nappies a day for her baby. However, 3­4 wasn't sufficient. B found it uncomfortable asking for more, firstly because she didn't know how to but also because she was questioned why she needed them.

Since leaving the IAC B has lived in different areas of Leeds. Since the age of six she has had big ambitions to be involved in politics and had dreams to one day be the prime minister of Bolivia. When she arrived in England she’d always planned on going back to Bolivia to continue her studies in Law. However, since having her daughter she says her priorities have changed and she has spent the last 4 years raising her and trying to be the best mum she can be. She has found it difficult to make friends in Leeds as there is no Bolivian community there. She has felt isolated and says that she has very different circumstances to other members of the Latin community that she has met. She has tried applying to college but has been told that she has to complete a four year ESOL course. This is unachievable due to the fees involved.

Volunteering has been a massive source of help to B. She has volunteered at the Refugee council in the past and now volunteers at the City of Sanctuary and a local church. She still likes to be involved in campaigning and organises protests and social events for the charity Leeds No Borders. B desperately wants to carry on with her life, go back to university or be able to work. However until she gains her right to remain she can't do anything and she faces the ongoing struggling of feeling like her life is on hold. It has been 6 months since her last appeal was made and she is still waiting for a verdict. In the past she has waited for 2 years to be told she hasn't been successful. She hopes that one day that she can return to Bolivia, and has decided if she is not granted asylum then she will return to Bolivia once her arrest warrant has expired.