

1.6 History of STAR

1994 STAR was born! Andy Davies, a student at Nottingham University, was amazed to discover that nothing existed to enable students to get involved in supporting refugees. He put up some posters and held a meeting – over 60 students came!

1996 Word spread, with founding member Elly Hargreave helping to start two more STAR groups in London and Edinburgh.

1997 Elly set up the first office in London and began coordinating the growth of STAR into a national network.

1998 The first national conference at Nottingham University, 'Beyond Words', was attended by over 80 STAR members.

1999 The government introduced its policy of dispersal, which meant asylum seekers were sent to locations across the UK (previously most had been located in the South East). The pressing need to provide support to these asylum seekers and raise awareness of refugee issues amongst the local populations in these areas led to the rapid growth of the STAR network: there were now 16 STAR groups.

STAR became a registered charity. A national office was established in London. The STAR Newsletter and national website were launched.

2000 The Friends of STAR scheme was launched as a way of enabling STAR graduates to remain supporters of the network.

2002 STAR received funding to employ four staff members at the office in London. The Youth Network, for 16 to 25 year olds, was launched with a national roadshow. STAR's first ever national campaign was launched: 'Asylum Policy is Pants'.

2003 STAR's first ever National Action Day took place: the first time the entire network did something on the same day.

2007 STAR launched their new website in the summer.

The 10th annual national STAR conference was held: 120 delegates, 12 workshops, 8 action sessions, 6 panellists, 3 keynote speakers, 1 short movie, and 1 truly AWESOME party.

2008 STAR's best Action Day saw over 900 sleeping out in 21 cities to demand the end of the destitution of refused asylum seekers as part of the Still Human Still Here campaign.

2009 STAR begins work on improving access to higher education for refugees, including the 'Equal Access' campaign at universities.

