**Farhad Atashin**

Farhad is a 30 year old man from Iran. He came to the UK in 2008 having fled for his life from the secret police in Iran who were upset at his political activities. However, like many Iranians, he was not able to persuade the Home Office of his claim and they chose to disbelieve him and refuse him. He has been destitute for 4 years during which time he has relied on the support of friends and local charities.

When Farhad first came to the UK he was a fit and healthy young man with a half-completed degree in Engineering he hoped to complete once his case was resolved. He loves football and plays well. He had no health conditions.

However, 4 years of destitution have taken their toll. Farhad was recently struck down with severe lower back pain. It was so extreme he couldn’t walk unaided and had to remain at home for 3 months. During this time he relied on the support of his GP for the pain relief he needed, for advice about not overdosing on painkillers by mistake and for further tests to determine whether this was a serious issue with his spine or a temporary nerve pain that would pass in a few months.

Farhad said ’It’s really important for me to access the GP. I hope the government doesn’t restrict access to the GP because my life is already so limited in this society. If I couldn’t access my GP I am worried about my health. What happens when I am depressed and anxious due to my situation? My GP said my back pain was probably due to my destitution and anxiety. What would happen to me if I couldn’t get the support I need? I’m very worried’.

He is now almost back to normal but it is frightening what could have happened if he were not able to access the advice and support of his GP and his Physiotherapist.

Farhad says ‘let’s be kind to each other and acknowledge we are all human beings’