



WHO IS A...?

Asylum Seeker

Someone who is fleeing persecution in their homeland, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities and exercised the legal right to apply for asylum.

Refugee

Someone whose asylum application has been successful and who is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution back home. Refugees have the same rights as permanent residents of the UK.

Migrant Worker

A migrant worker is a person who migrates from one country to another for the primary purpose of work, whether permanently or temporarily. Collectively migrants add to the culture and diversity of the region, enriching life in the UK for everyone.

DID YOU KNOW?

People coming to the UK from an European Union (EU) member state have every right to be here in the same way that we have the right to go to their country or to other member states to live, work or retire.

WHY ARE MIGRANT WORKERS COMING TO THE REGION?

We operate within a global economy and people decide to migrate to and from the North East for many reasons. Many organisations encourage people to the area to work or study, bringing valuable skills to contribute to the economy of the North East.

WHERE DO MIGRANT WORKERS COME FROM?

Migrant workers can come to Britain from all over the world, including Australia, India, South Africa, and more recently the new accession states which joined the EU in 2004, often referred to as 'A8' countries, which includes Poland and Lithuania as well as others.

MIGRANT WORKERS DON'T CONTRIBUTE TO THE UK ECONOMY?

NO... NOT TRUE!

Migrant workers are essential to the UK economy. Migrant workers pay income tax and National Insurance contributions. The UK has an ageing population as a result of declining birth rates and the fact that people are living longer, so migrant workers are needed to ensure that there is a sufficient workforce to fill the available jobs.

THEY ARE ONLY HERE FOR THE BENEFITS

NO... MIGRANT WORKERS MAY ONLY CLAIM CERTAIN BENEFITS IF THEY ARE IN WORK AND THEREFORE PAYING TAXES.

Data shows that migrant workers come to the UK to work, not to claim benefits. 99% of applications for National Insurance numbers made by new migrants from May 04 – Dec 08 were for employment purposes.

THEY ARE TAKING OUR JOBS?

NO... THEY ARE NOT!

In general migrant workers move to areas where there are vacancies. Often they are filling vacancies where there are skills shortages or that are hard to fill.

The UK has a long history of recruiting workers from abroad to work in areas that are hard to fill. Migration does not cause unemployment.

MIGRANTS ARE GIVEN PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO SOCIAL HOUSING?

NO... THEY ARE NOT!

Recent research commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission found no evidence of migrants being given preferential access to social housing.

Most new migrants to the UK, particularly from A8 countries such as Poland, are not eligible to claim entitlement to social housing unless they have been resident in the UK and in work for at least 12 months and even then must meet general criteria applied to the population at large.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

MIGRANT WORKERS ARE DRAINING THE REGION'S PUBLIC SERVICES?

NO... HARDLY!

Far from acting as a drain on public services, often new migrants help to deliver vital services in areas such as social care, education, health and construction.

MIGRANTS BRING CRIME TO OUR STREETS

NO... NOT ACCORDING TO ACPO

There is no evidence that migrants commit more crime than anyone else, says the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Their recent findings presented to the Home Secretary found that offending rates among migrant communities are in line with the rate of offending in the general population.

They are, however, more likely to be a victim of crime, suffering racial harassment in the community and discrimination in the work place.

MIGRANTS DON'T PAY COUNCIL TAX?

NO...

Any person who is the tenant or owner of a property is liable to pay Council Tax, regardless of nationality.

CAN YOU IMAGINE THE UK WITHOUT THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY MIGRANTS?

Thanks to the innovation of migrants to the UK we have seen the birth of Marks and Spencer, the development of the mini car and the creation of 'our' national dish – chicken tikka masala!

OUR REGION HAS BEEN FLOODED WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS?

NO... NOT TRUE

The North East of England has a population of about 2.5 million. There are less than 4,000 asylum seekers which represents less than 0.25% of the total population of the region. There were 3358 asylum seekers from 78 different countries in our region at the end of March 2009. Around a third live in Newcastle and a third in Tees Valley.

(Numbers of individuals supported by the Home Office. Source: NESMP Management Information March 09)

The Regional Top Ten

1. Newcastle.....	1103
2. Middlesbrough	739
3. Gateshead	378
4. Stockton.....	375
5. Sunderland	341
6. North Tyneside	159
7. South Tyneside	126
8. Darlington.....	92
9. Hartlepool.....	42
10. Redcar & Cleveland.....	3

(Numbers of individuals supported by the Home Office. Source: NESMP Management Information March 2009)

THEY ARE HERE ILLEGALLY NO... THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN 'ILLEGAL' OR 'BOGUS' ASYLUM SEEKER

International law states that anyone has the right to apply for asylum in another country and remain there until the authorities have assessed their claim.

The UK asylum system is strictly controlled and complex. It is very difficult to get asylum. The burden is on the person seeking asylum to prove and evidence "a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion"

(1951 UN Convention on Refugees)

ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE LAZY?

NO... THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WORK UNTIL THEY ARE GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS

Many asylum seekers are skilled and want to work and contribute yet the law prevents them from doing so.

THEY TAKE OUR HOMES AND ARE GIVEN NEW FURNITURE, WASHERS, FRIDGES AND COOKERS?

NO... IT'S NOT THEIRS

Asylum seekers cannot choose where to live – this is decided by the Home Office. When they are allocated a house or flat, asylum seekers have often been given the ones that are empty; the properties landlords find hard to let. Asylum seekers are given support and furnished accommodation until the outcome of their application is decided.

The household equipment never becomes the property of the asylum seeker and is reused for the next family.

And contrary to popular myth at no point are they given cars, satellite TV or mobile phones.

ONE IN FOUR COME TO THE UK?

NO... THE REALITY IS LESS THAN 2%

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 80% of the world's 16 million asylum seekers flee to developing countries; usually those neighbouring their own.

THEY ALL WANT TO COME TO BRITAIN?

NOT SO... PEOPLE FLEEING THEIR COUNTRY ARE SEEKING SAFETY

A Home Office report concluded that there was absolutely no evidence to suggest that asylum seekers had a detailed knowledge of our welfare benefits system.

Most asylum seekers do not choose their destination country. Many of those with some choice come to the UK because they have friends or family already here.

(Source: Home Office, Understanding the decision-making of asylum seekers)

WE PAY MORE COUNCIL TAX BECAUSE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS?

NO... NOT TRUE

Asylum seekers are looked after by the Government, not local councils. Migrants and Refugees made a net contribution of approximately £3 billion to the UK economy, according to the Home Office – worth 1p on income tax.

WE ARE BEING RIPPED OFF?

NO... HARDLY

A typical asylum seeker gets £6.02 per day to live on. They lose this if they don't live where they are told to by the Government.

That's £42.16 per week – roughly 30% below the poverty line.

BRITAIN IS A SOFT TOUCH?

NO... DID YOU KNOW?

Upon arriving in the UK:

All Asylum Seekers are:

- fingerprinted (even children)
- photographed
- security checked
- issued with ID cards
- and may even be electronically tagged

All must

- report at regular intervals to police stations or immigration centres

All can be

- locked up at any point during their asylum application (including children and pregnant women)

IT IS SAFE BACK HOME?

NO... IT'S NOT

There is a connection between the situation in the home countries of the people who come to the UK for refuge.

Most asylum seekers in our region come from Iraq, Iran, Zimbabwe, Eritrea and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

All of which have seen serious human rights abuses and/or are places where war and conflict is ongoing.

This Myth Buster was produced by the North East Strategic Migration Partnership.

To order more copies or to find out more about what we do please visit our website

www.nesmp.org.uk

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