

NNRF NEWS



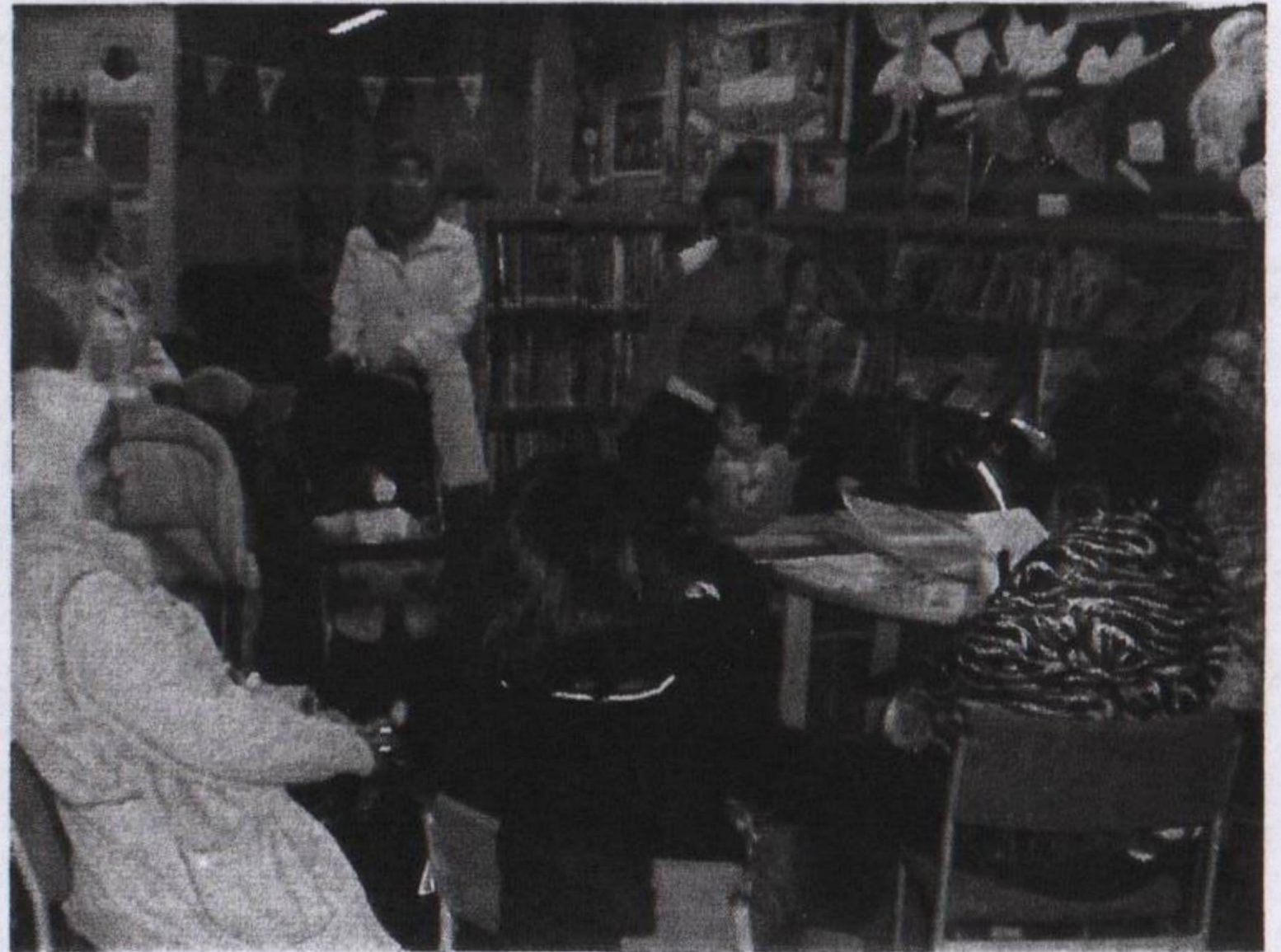
Volunteer and Staff Newsletter

August 2009

ESOL Tour of Central Library

11 women from the ESOL women's class and their children attended an organised tour of Nottingham Central Library in June. For many of the women this was their first experience of visiting a library. A full tour was given which showed the wide range of books and services offered by the library, including many materials for learning English, numerous dictionaries, a wide range of books in various languages, access to computers and the children's section with many dual language books.


The library also runs conversational English classes on Thursdays from 3.30-5.30pm and has a range of children's activities on throughout the year. The women were all given City Cards and were encouraged to make use of both the Central Library and Local Libraries.



What's On

Tuesday Night Project Presents....

MUSIC TUESDAY



WORLD MUSIC
(please bring your own CD's or Mp3 to play)

LEARN TO DJ

DRUM & GUITAR WORKSHOPS

Free Hot Meal

@ The Square Centre,
Alfred Street North

THE 1st TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Every Month

Tuesday Night Project
Every Tues, 5-10pm

Talk Talk English
Conversation Group
Every Thursday
from 6.30pm Starts
20th August

August

Summer
Barbecue
11th August

September

Ethiopian and
Eritrean New
Year Celebration
11th September

Study for a Post Grad Diploma in Career Guidance at Nottingham Trent University



- Curriculum content: guidance interviewing and group work; equal opportunities; information management; networking; designing and delivering careers education and careers guidance theory. A portfolio is also completed.
- 12 weeks of work based learning
- 100% of 2008's graduates gained employment in a careers related area
- Course runs on a full time or part time basis.

Course Funding: *Information, Advice and Guidance Diversity Grants* are available for candidates who meet criteria designed to increase the diversity of the workforce in careers guidance. Sponsorship comprises a £4000 living allowance and fee payment for full time students or fee payment for part time students

If you are interested in applying, contact Helen Reed, the programme leader Helen.reed@ntu.ac.uk

One Stop Shop Advice Project

The One Stop Shop (OSS) Advice Project at Refuge Forum is led by Fiona Broome. The project sees around 20 - 30 refugees and asylum seekers each week, mostly by appointment and provides advice on health, housing and education issues. A number of specially trained volunteers provide OSS advice on Thursday mornings and a drop in advice session for women only is available on Friday mornings.

While some advice is given on a one-off basis, Fiona also has more complex, ongoing cases and some clients come to the project for advice on a number of different issues.

The project works with different statutory and voluntary agencies in Nottingham enabling people to access a range of services. The work covers a wide range of issues and includes:

- Securing accommodation for homeless people
- Finding schools and nurseries for children
- Helping people attend ESOL classes
- Assisting people to register with a GP
- Enabling people to access urgent healthcare
- Referring people to social care for further support

Fiona also builds links with other agencies and attends groups in relation to health, housing and education focusing on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Fiona offers outreach advice sessions around the city. Currently she goes to a homeless hostel in St Anns once a month and is planning an advice session at a GP practice in Sneinton.

The project is funded by Nottingham City Council and has been running since 2003.

Migrant amnesty would boost economy

An estimated 618,000 people have entered Britain unofficially and are living here without papers (i.e. "illegally"). Recent research by the London School of Economics concluded that an amnesty that regularised these migrants would add £3bn a year to gross domestic product and generate annual tax revenues of almost £850m.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b4b1fcd0-59ce-11de-b687-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1

Healthcare and failed asylum seekers



Following a ruling in March, access to healthcare for failed asylum seekers in England was restricted. Ministers have now said that they will extend free healthcare to those failed asylum seekers who cannot leave the country "through no fault of their own" or if they have children but most failed asylum seekers will still be charged for secondary healthcare.

In Wales, a recent ruling means that all failed asylum seekers living in Wales will have full access to free NHS care while in Scotland, there is no firm legislation on the issue. However the Scottish government says that for all practical purposes, if a failed asylum seeker was living there when they applied to stay, they should continue to receive free health care until they are finally deported.

Social housing does not favour migrants

Despite the view commonly promoted by the right wing media, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has found that there is no evidence that new arrivals to the UK are able to jump council housing queues. Once migrants are entitled to help from public funds, the same proportion live in social housing as UK-born residents.



The main issue is that social housing supply does not meet the demands of the population so that everyone who wants social housing has a long wait.

While 11% of new arrivals do get help with housing, these are almost all asylum seekers who are generally housed in poorer, hard to let, no-choice accommodation. Even if they did want to support themselves, current government policy means that they do not have that option as they cannot legally work.

On 29 June, the prime minister told MPs he wanted to allow councils in England to give additional preference to locals, seen as a response to the British National Party, which has claimed immigrants are able to get more help with housing.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk_politics/8137408.stm

New amounts for Section 95 support

As of 11 July 2009, the rates of Section 95/NASS support will increase to the following:

Qualifying couple	£69.57
Lone parent aged 18 or over	£42.16
Single person aged 25 or over, excluding lone parent (where the decision to grant support is made prior to the 05/10/09 and the person has or will have reached age 25 prior to that date)	£42.16
Any other single person aged 18 or over, excluding lone parent	£35.13
Person aged at least 16 but under 18 (except a member of a qualifying couple)	£38.18
Person aged under 16	£50.81

Most amounts have increased by 5.2%, but support payable to lone parents over 18 and single people over 25 has stayed the same. 5.2% is comparable to increases in mainstream benefits enacted in April 2009. Section 4 support stays at £35 despite the effects of inflation and the increased cost of food.

If you know of any destitute asylum seekers from Somalia, please refer them to Refugee Action to apply for Section 4 support.

Also see:

<http://www.asaproject.org/web/images/PDFs/news/s>

The human cost of immigration detention

A new report 'Out of sight, out of mind' released by detainee rights charity Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) reveals the unacceptable human cost of indefinite immigration detention in the UK and calls on the government to halt its plans to increase detention capacity.

Testimonies from immigration detainees show the devastating physical and emotional damage caused by immigration detention in the UK.

Frances was detained twice, with her children, and was not given HIV medication for several weeks whilst in detention.

Luisa claimed asylum after she fled from the men who brought her to the UK to work as a prostitute and was subsequently detained

Dilip arrived in the UK aged 14 and was wrongly told by immigration officials that he could not claim asylum as a child. He was later detained as an adult for nearly two years.

David had been in the UK for 39 years when he was arrested for driving offences, given a deportation order and taken into immigration detention. He suffered a stroke in detention but was not taken to hospital.

Full report: <http://www.biduk.org/library/BID%20-%20'Out%20of%20sight,%20out%20of%20mind'.pdf>

Immigration detention in the UK

Nearly 30,000 people every year are held in immigration detention in the UK, either in one of the UK's 11 detention centres, in prisons or in police cells.

UKBA policy states that someone can be detained *at any stage* of the asylum claim

UKBA's detention budget for 2009/10 is £107.1 million.

There is no automatic access to the courts

There is **no limit** to how long someone can be held

In 2008 the government announced its intention to increase detention capacity by 60%.

Detainees include British citizens wrongly identified as foreign nationals; asylum seekers who have sought sanctuary in the UK; **children** detained with their families; the wives and husbands of British citizens; and long-time British residents who have served custodial sentences for driving offences or petty theft.

In the first six months of 2008 there were 109 cases of self-harm requiring medical attention

Suppression of protest in detention centres

Twenty people initiated a hunger strike in Yarlswood immigration detention centre, Bedfordshire, in June to protest about the detention of children and the standard of medical care available to detainees. The protest was brutally broken up days later by 20-35 uniformed officers. They surrounded one of the protesters, Melchior Singo, as his screaming children looked on, dragging him away as his wife Ethol tried to stop them.

Previously, at Harmondsworth immigration removal centre, peaceful protests in the detention centre led to those involved being transferred to prison. In April 2008 a group of 28 detainees who held a peaceful protest about their detention were intimidated and forcibly moved out by riot-trained so-called Tornado Units, with 21 of them being moved to prisons.

Supporting Detainees Can You Help?

Detention is a very isolating experience and quickly takes a major toll on people's mental and emotional health. Help from outside with arranging bail or securing legal representation to avoid deportation is invaluable to someone who is lost within the system.

The Nottingham Anti-deportation Campaign group supports asylum seekers from the Nottingham area. The group tries to release people from detention and prevent them from being deported to countries they fled in fear.

The support ranges from staying in touch with the detainee by telephone, liaising with legal representative and carrying out research into the countries people are being deported to. The group also campaign publicly to gain wider support for someone being threatened with deportation when it is appropriate.

Can you help with this work? The Anti-deportation campaign needs people to research; to join a small team helping a detainee; to read documents; to offer backup to others. No special knowledge is needed to begin with.

If you would like to get involved with supporting detainees, please contact nodeportations@riseup.net

OutCry! End the detention of children

Every year around 2,000 children in the UK are incarcerated in immigration detention.

Children in detention are either the sons or daughters of asylum seekers or migrants and detained with their families, or they are detained because the government wrongly believes they are over 18. They are the only children in the UK who can be locked up indefinitely without having committed a crime.

Detention damages children: Children feel that they are being punished and do not understand why. Children have experienced insomnia, weight loss, bedwetting, depression and self harm while in detention.

The detention of children is unnecessary: There is no evidence that families run away from the authorities if they are not detained. Children's education and health needs, friendship ties and the desire to be settled in the UK all prevent families 'disappearing'.

Detention of children is a waste of money: It costs £130 a day to keep a child in immigration detention. Many children are detained for over six weeks. To keep a family of four in detention for six weeks costs over £20,000.

Over the coming months Outcry will be working with other organisations and individuals who share the view that the detention of children must end. Outcry will be pressing the government to change its policy so that children are no longer locked up in detention centres.

Sign up at: <http://campaign.publicaffairsbriefing.co.uk/EmailSupport.aspx?cid=2f379691-e8ee-4566-9871-cf5542290edd>

Calais

The port town of Calais in France is currently home to around 1,800 migrants who live with constant harassment by the local police and live in the 'jungles' around the edges of Calais. These 'jungles' are where people who have travelled across Europe wait in makeshift shelters, with little food or medical assistance, for their nightly attempts to get onto lorries making the crossing to the UK.

The camps in Calais are home to migrants for the most part from Afghanistan and Iraq though there are refugees from virtually every political flashpoint in the world – Iran, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea. The border control measures between France and the UK make it impossible for people to cross the border legally into the UK to claim asylum and has forced people trying to seek sanctuary into the hands of people smugglers. Now French police are preparing to destroy the camps and deport the people living in them. There have been many reports of their harassment of migrants. One reported incident involved riot police shooting tear gas into an Afghani camp before beating up and removing people.

Nearly 25% of refugee women have tried to kill themselves

A study conducted by the Scottish Refugee Council found that almost 25% of women seeking asylum in Scotland had attempted suicide while 70% had experienced physical or sexual violence.

Of those women surveyed, 22% reported trying to take their own life at some point, while 20% reported suicidal thoughts in the seven days prior to taking part in the survey. Asylum seeking women are not helped by the difficulty in accessing domestic violence services due to the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) rule.

People with NRPF are not eligible for many public funds that other UK residents claim. The rules mean that asylum seeking women that are subject to domestic violence cannot access hostel places.

A recent case heard by the European Court of Human Rights recognised domestic violence as a gender-based crime.

<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/scotland/Nearly-2537-of-refugee-women.5381766.jp>

Alternatives to Immigration Detention

The Millbank alternatives to detention project was piloted between Autumn 2007 and Summer 2008. The project was intended to reduce the numbers of children being locked up in immigration removal centres after their parents' asylum claims failed and to encourage them to leave the UK voluntarily. The costly project ran for less than a year, dealt with only 13 families and only resulted in 1 family returning to their country of origin. The Children's Society said that the main reasons for the scheme's failure were Border Agency confusion and unrealistic demands placed upon asylum seekers.

Families invited to take part had been settled in the UK for some time and were required to uproot their lives and move to the centre in Kent from which the scheme operated. They were given only 7 days to make all the arrangements to leave their homes, sell any possessions and take their children out of school. In many cases, families had

outstanding claims and so couldn't even be removed from the country legally. Some families had been referred to the project when there was no safe route for them to return to their countries of origin, others had medical problems that made the accommodation unsuitable.

The threat of destitution for those who did not agree to move to the Millbank facility meant that families who did agree, did so under duress.

Although organisations were initially pleased that an alternative to detention was being explored, a spokesperson for the Children's Society said that "good intentions weren't translated into serious action" and that "this was a failed opportunity to try to do something about the 2,000 children who are locked up in immigration centres every year".

It is hoped that a similar project currently being piloted in Glasgow will be more successfully executed.

Asylum seekers' skills wasted

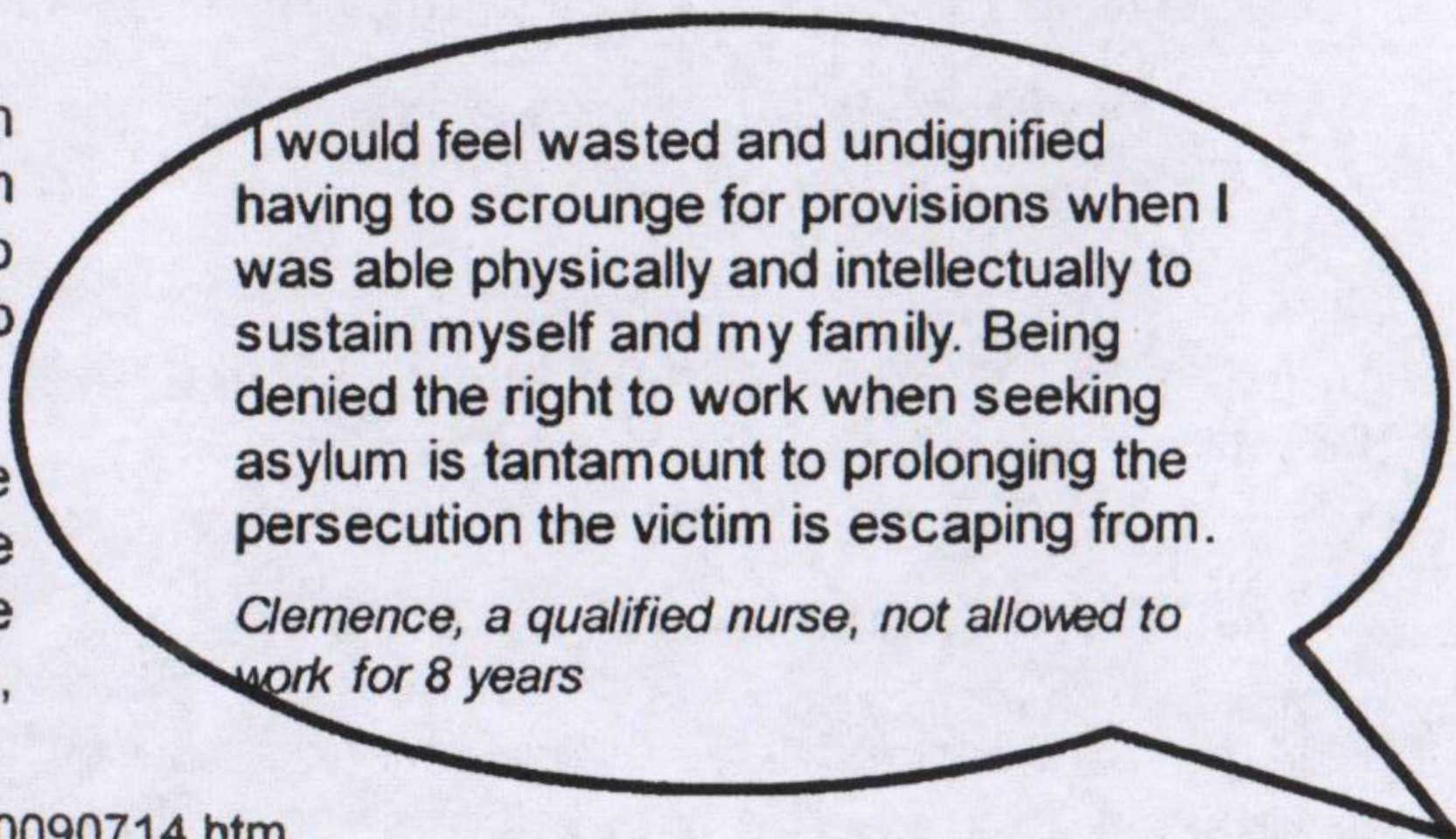
Recent research by the Refugee Council and the Zimbabwe Association reveals the range of skills the UK is losing by denying the vast majority of asylum seekers entitlement to work.

Since 2002, almost all asylum seekers in the UK have been prevented from working. As a result, those who have waited many years for a decision on their claim, or who have been turned down but are unable to go back because their country remains unsafe, have been forced to rely on minimal state support or left destitute.

The study focuses on the Zimbabwean community, but many findings of the research also apply to people from other nationalities, who want to contribute their skills and experiences to the UK.

Of the 292 Zimbabweans surveyed, 64% are educated to GCSE level and beyond, 45 are qualified teachers or lecturers and others were previously working as town planners, engineers, mechanics and IT specialists.

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/press/2009/july/20090714.htm>



I would feel wasted and undignified having to scrounge for provisions when I was able physically and intellectually to sustain myself and my family. Being denied the right to work when seeking asylum is tantamount to prolonging the persecution the victim is escaping from.

Clemence, a qualified nurse, not allowed to work for 8 years

Skewed perceptions of asylum seekers

A study by the British Red Cross has shown that British people have a huge misperception of asylum issues in Britain with young people being especially prejudiced towards immigrants. A quarter of people massively overestimated the numbers of refugees reaching the United Kingdom believing that there are more than 100,000 asylum applications every year – about four times the annual figure of 25,670, according to a survey carried out for the charity.

Most people saw refugees as poorly educated and believed that the UK offered shelter to far more migrants than it does. The negative image of asylum seekers was especially prevalent amongst 18-24 year olds of whom nearly two-thirds chose the word "uneducated" when asked to describe refugees.

There was also a belief that Britain had a disproportionate share of the world's refugees.

The Reality

Britain received 25,670 asylum applications last year 1/3 of refugees have university degrees or professional qualifications.

Britain has 3% of the world's refugees (around 302,000 people)

More than 1,100 medically qualified refugees are recorded on the British Medical Association's database. It only costs £10,000 to prepare a refugee doctor to practise in the UK. It costs £250,000 to train a doctor from scratch.

There are more than 1,500 refugee teachers in England

The top 10 refugee producing countries in 2006 all have poor human rights records or are places where war or conflict is ongoing

In 2005, around 102 million people entered the UK, including some 284,000 students. Asylum seekers represented just 0.025% of the total.

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/basics/facts.htm>

Asylum Backlog A report published by the Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons criticised the backlog of asylum cases under the New Asylum Model (NAM). NAM was introduced in 2007 due to a backlog of cases at that time. Those old cases were deemed legacy cases and all new cases were to be decided under NAM with a view to providing a system whereby claims were decided more quickly and a new backlog avoided. The recent report suggests that NAM has failed to do this.

ASAP's Duty Scheme goes full-time

The Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) is now providing free advice and representation at the Asylum Support Tribunal in Croydon five days a week. To refer a client with an oral hearing, fax the following documents to 020 8686 1899:

- Contact details of the adviser
- Decision letter from the Home Office
- Notice of appeal
- Any other relevant documents or evidence

The client must arrive at the Tribunal at least an hour before the hearing so the ASAP adviser has time to discuss the case with them.

INITIAL ACCOMMODATION PILOT

UKBA has announced a pilot in Birmingham to provide Section 4 accommodation as soon as a valid claim is lodged. The pilot will run from 6 July and will last 6 weeks. It will apply only to those who are 'street homeless'. And only 100 individuals will be accepted onto the pilot scheme. UKBA intends to provide accommodation on the same day as receiving by fax the Section 4 application form. The initial accommodation will be for up to nine days in Birmingham. Checks on destitution etc. will be carried out in that time. If not enough people in the West Midlands are eligible, others outside the region might be accepted. UKBA says individuals will then be dispersed back to their region after the initial period.

Reports

RCO News, May/June 2009

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/howwehelp/RCO/RCO%20News/RCO%20News%20May_June%202009.pdf

RCO Women's News, May/June 2009

http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/howwehelp/RCO/RCO%20Womans%20News/Issue%2035%20May_June%202009.pdf

'Irregular Migration: the urgent need for a new approach, Migrants' Rights Network.

The publication draws together research findings to present concise, evidenced information about pathways to irregularity as well as the impact of UK enforcement policy and the available evidence on regularisation programmes.

http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/downloads/policy_reports/irregularmigrants_summarypamphlet.pdf
http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/downloads/policy_reports/irregularmigrants_fullbooklet.pdf

Detention, Removal and People Living with HIV. British HIV Association, June 2009.

<http://www.bhiva.org/cms1224287.asp>

Trafficking Persons Report, USSD

Report covers all forms of human trafficking globally between April 2008 and March 2009-06-30

<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/>

Still destitute, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

<http://www.jrct.org.uk/text.asp?section=0001000200030006>

