

# Refugee Community Network

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## Larry McCloskey

Larry is the new Housing, Health and Education advice worker at 118 Mansfield Road. If you want to see him, make an appointment at 118. He can help with housing problems, bad neighbours; problems getting health care; contact with schools and colleges; and disability and other benefit.

## Harrassment

Is it true that compared to other cities there have been fewer incidents of harassment and violence against asylum seekers and refugees in Nottingham? Certainly, we know of incidents of racial and other forms of harassment. For example, a mother and her five children have had stones thrown at their windows, rubbish put through their letterbox and been verbally abused. In Bestwood, a 6 year old Iranian girl and her mother were attacked by teenage boys. If you have experienced harassment **DO NOT KEEP QUIET**. At the very least, you should report any incident. The council has a racial harassment officer who works with refugees and reports on harassment. If you need advice, please come to 118.

## Signing and repairs

There is concern that some accommodation providers expect people to sign more frequently than others. Also, that if people miss a signing, accommodation providers respond differently. Why do people need to sign every week? Who sets the rules? Do NASS think that families with children in school are all going to disappear? There are also ongoing problems with getting repairs done. Again, if you feel that your housing provider isn't being reasonable, come to 118.

## Coalition against legal aid cuts

You may know that the government is planning to cut the legal aid for asylum cases. For example, they want to limit the time available to solicitors to 5 hours for the asylum application and 4 hours for an appeal. This would make it very difficult to prepare a good case, particularly if translations are needed and interpreters involved. There is now a campaign against these proposed cuts. It includes organisations like Liberty, the Medical Foundation and national and local refugee and asylum support groups. If you are in an organisation that wants to support this campaign, you should contact the Coalition at Liberty, 21 Tabard Street London SE1 4LA

## Tory plans to fly asylum seekers off to an island – somewhere

At the recent Conservative Party conference, Oliver Letwin said that if the Conservatives (or Tories) get into power, asylum seekers would be sent to an island . . . somewhere. The government has dismissed this idea as vague (where is the island???) and unworkable. However, Letwin's idea is not that different from Blunkett's idea of setting up 'transit centres' in Eastern Europe. This plan has been 'shelved' because other EU government didn't agree with it. However, it shows that in the run up to the next election, asylum seekers, refugees and their supporters are going to have to fight hard to defend their rights.

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