



## ASYLUM SEEKER BRIEFING

### Dispelling the Myths

**MYTH: Our council tax bills are going up to pay for asylum-seekers.**

FACT: The costs of looking after asylum seekers and processing their claims are met by central government.

**MYTH: The UK takes more than its fair share of the world's asylum seekers.**

FACT: 11 other European countries have more asylum seekers per head of population than Britain. Britain has 0.7 asylum seekers for every 1000 people whilst Austria has 3.0. (Home Office Figures)

**MYTH: Britain is a 'soft touch' for asylum seekers.**

FACT: The Government has tightened up immigration control. Ferry firms and hauliers who bring over stowaways are fined and extra immigration staff have been issued with heartbeat and breathing detectors.

**MYTH: All our asylum seekers are bogus.**

FACT: The latest Home Office data shows just under 28% of those applying last year were found to have a genuine case, and were granted refugee status. (Regional records show that 53% of asylum seekers in the region are granted permission to stay in this country)

**MYTH: All asylum seekers abuse the NHS.**

FACT: The government has to look after asylum seekers, including medical needs, under international law (see Key Fact 8). Some asylum seekers are qualified nurses, doctors and consultants.

**MYTH: All asylum-seekers live in luxury.**

FACT: Single asylum seekers aged over 25 live on £39-a-week, whilst married couples have £62-a-week. This pays for all non-housing costs. If they stay with relatives or friends they can be denied that. When their asylum claim is decided the asylum seeker has to leave their furnished accommodation. They are not provided with mobile phones, DVD's, cars, or televisions.

**MYTH: Asylum seekers don't want to work.**

FACT: Many seekers have left behind businesses or skilled jobs in their home country and are keen to start work and earn money. People who arrived after July 2002 are banned from working in the UK whilst they claim asylum. They can do voluntary work.

**MYTH: Asylum seekers are taking our housing.**

FACT: Most are given "hard-to-let", or properties that required extensive repair and no one else wants and do not form part of any council waiting list. Most are housed in privately-rented property. (see Key Facts 6 and 7).

**MYTH: Most actually come from safe countries.**

FACT: Most refugees in recent years have come from the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Columbia, Turkey, Iraq and Iran - countries where there has been serious conflict or grave human rights abuses. Most would prefer to stay at home, but have fled because of persecution.

**MYTH: Asylum-seekers are linked to criminal gangs.**

FACT: Statistics show that there has been no refugee crime wave.  
(Adapted from the national press)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Web site addresses for more information:**

- [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)
- [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)
- <http://www.asylumsupport.info/>
- [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)
- [www.refugeeaccess.info](http://www.refugeeaccess.info)
- [http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/living\\_in\\_doncaster/health\\_advice/advice\\_support\\_and\\_counselling/asylum\\_seekers\\_support.asp](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/living_in_doncaster/health_advice/advice_support_and_counselling/asylum_seekers_support.asp)