

## About Asylum...

Asylum continues to be one of the most important issues for the British public. Reporting and commentary is often hostile, unbalanced and factually incorrect. Just look at the contrast between the headlines and the facts inside.

We encourage everyone to 'myth bust' whenever faced with negative and inaccurate comments and feelings about refugees and asylum seekers.

### First, some definitions...

#### Asylum Seeker:

A person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been decided.

#### 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.

#### 'Failed' Asylum Seeker:

A person whose asylum application has failed and who has no other protection claim awaiting a decision. Some refused asylum seekers voluntarily return home, others are forcibly returned and for some it is not safe or practical for them to return until conditions in their country change.

#### Illegal Immigrant:

Someone whose entry into or presence in a country contravenes immigration laws.

#### Economic Migrant:

Someone who has moved to another country to work.

## What is Refugee Week?

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme containing cultural, educational and arts events commemorating the contributions made by refugees and nurturing a better understanding between different communities.

## What happens during Refugee Week?

During Refugee Week, hundreds of events are organised throughout the United Kingdom. Over 300 activities took place across the UK, attended by nearly 100,000 people in 2012. Hundreds more followers supported Refugee Week through social media.

## What's happening in Bedford?

### Refugee Week Launch, Monday 15th June

Visit our Market Stall at Harpur Square outside Central Library, from 11.00am to 6.00pm.

**Evening event with Women for Refugee Women and the Swan Theatre Company**, a talk and poetry reading from 6.30pm at Bedford Central Library. Free tickets are available from the Library.

**Film: In This World, Tuesday 16th June at The Place Theatre, 7.00pm.** This film tells the story of the journey made by 2 Afghan boys from a refugee camp to the United Kingdom. Tickets £2.00 (free to refugees)

**Football Family Fun Day, Sunday 21st June** 11am till 4pm, at Russell Park, Bedford.

## How can I get involved?

You can show your support for Refugee Week by:

- Organising an event in your local area
- Visiting an event in your area
- Supporting existing activities

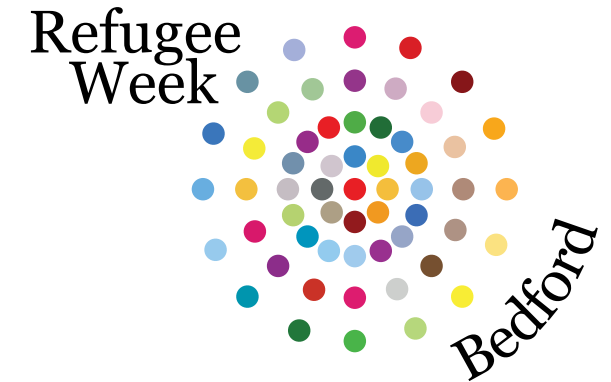
If you would like to get involved, please contact us by email at [brian@brass27b.org](mailto:brian@brass27b.org) or alternatively by phone on 01234 211381.

Visit: [www.brassbedford.org.uk](http://www.brassbedford.org.uk)

**Donate** to help us build a better Refugee Week for next year!

# Myth Busting

## The Truth about Asylum in the UK



## Different pasts, shared future

Refugee Week is a unique opportunity to discover and celebrate the contributions refugees bring to the UK

**Refugee Week 2015 is from the 15th to the 21st of June**

## Headlines...

### “The ‘destitute’ asylum seekers with luxury TVs and iPads...”

*(The Daily Mail, 10th January 2014)*

**FACT:** Asylum seekers usually live in houses with basic essentials such as a bed, chairs and cooker. A national report of asylum seekers and refugees revealed 85% experience hunger, 95% cannot afford to buy clothes or shoes and 80% are not able to maintain good health. The Red Cross emphasized that every year thousands of asylum seekers and refugees find themselves entirely cut off from government support, unable to meet essential basic needs. Asylum seekers are entitled to claim support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and is currently £36.62 per week for a person aged 18 or over which is given in the form of card. This is 70% of what a person on Income Support receives and is below the official poverty line.

### “Rescue boats? I’d use gunships to stop migrants”

*(The Sun, 17th April 2015).*

**FACT:** The African migrants fleeing Libya and other near by war-torn countries are facing intimidation, violence and extortion at the point of departure. They represent some of the most vulnerable people in international law at the present time. Many will have legitimate claims for asylum under the 1951 Geneva Convention. This article, which compared migrants to “cockroaches”, was published hours before the weekend capsizing of a fishing vessel packed with migrants, with the latest reports suggesting the death toll could reach 950.

### “Why should broke Britain bankroll immigrant spongers?”

*(The Telegraph, 20th January 2012)*

**FACT:** Immigrants pay more money into the UK system than the British themselves. Approximately 30,000 jobs have been created just in Leicester by Ugandan Asian refugees since 1972. Around 1,200 refugees are medically qualified and are on the British Medical Association’s database. It has been estimated that it costs £25,000 to help a refugee doctor to practise in Britain however training a new doctor can cost up to £250,000.

### “Asylum seekers a drain on the UK’s economy...”

*(Mail Online, 15th June 2013)*

**FACT:** After initial barriers such as the ability to speak English and the recognition of overseas qualifications are overcome, refugees can make a valuable contribution as professionals, tax payers and as active members of their local community. The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) study highlights that immigrants, including refugees, pay more into the public purse compared to their UK born counterparts. The IPPR said “this is a first step in understanding the true economic impacts of immigration and hope that the results provide some corrective for the belief that immigrants are a drain on the public purse”.

### “Asylum Seeker Crimes go Unpunished”

*(Daily Mail, 2nd May 2011)*

**FACT:** There is no evidence that Asylum Seekers are more likely to be criminals even though they are forced to live in poverty. A report from the Association of Chief Police Officers backs this up. It states that individuals fleeing from their home countries are more likely to be the victims of a crime. If someone attempting to claim asylum has any criminal history, no matter how minor; their application for naturalisation will be denied and asylum seekers are very aware.

### “Asylum Seekers sent to more affluent areas”

*(Daily Mail, 23rd December 2005)*

**FACT:** More fortunate asylum seekers who get accommodated are mostly in deprived areas where they are more likely to be victims of racial harassment, in hard to let houses that are of poor quality as they have no choice in where they live. However, increased numbers of asylum seekers have been left destitute and on the street as faith groups and charities have stated that they cannot manage “We have seen a disturbing increase in destitution across the country, and it is affecting people at all stages of the asylum process.”

### “Health Minister: Immigrants to blame for record rise in TB”

*(Daily Mail, 8th December 2010)*

**FACT:** TB was never eradicated from Britain. Cases of reported TB contraction have never dropped below 5000 a year. Half of those diagnosed with TB were British born. TB is more common in poor places where the populous have weaker immune systems and live in overcrowded properties. The majority of immigrants contract TB after having already lived in the UK for 2 years and get the disease due to stress and poor living conditions.

### “Government is using a “soft touch” to tackle immigration...”

*(Daily Express, 19th February 2014)*

**FACT:** The UK asylum system is strictly controlled, complex and it is extremely difficult to gain entry into Britain. The system is so tough that the majority get their application for asylum refused. It was estimated that out of the total population of 63.7 million, in 2013, refugees and asylum seekers accounted for just 0.24%. The highest numbers of positive asylum decisions at first instance in 2014 were recorded in Germany (41 thousand), followed by Sweden (31 thousand), Italy (21 thousand), France (15 thousand), the Netherlands (14 thousand) and the United Kingdom (10 thousand). Therefore, the assumption that Britain is a ‘soft touch’ is untrue.

### “Britain opens door to Asylum Seekers”

*(The Express, 2nd June 2011)*

**FACT:** Britain comes 32nd in the world for taking in Asylum seekers. It is the developing countries that take most of the world Asylum seekers such as Pakistan and Kenya.

Sources:

[www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

[www.thesun.co.uk](http://www.thesun.co.uk)

[www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk)

[www.dailyexpress.co.uk](http://www.dailyexpress.co.uk)