

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.

Refugee Week Book List

The Girl Who Smiled Beads by Clemantine Wamariya, Elizabeth Weill

A memoir of the Author Clemantine Wamariya. She talks about the genocide (The civil war) in Rwanda and the aftermath of the war on the lives of people who had nothing to do with it.

Farewell, My Orange by Iwaki Kei , Meredith McKinney

Two immigrants, Salimah and Sayuri, navigate isolation, a new language, and devastating loss on their way to a lifelong friendship.

The Boy on the Beach: My Family's Escape from Syria and Our Hope for a New Home by Tima Kurdi

An impassioned plea for the rights of refugees through the heartbreaking account of one family's unimaginable loss.

A Rope from the Sky: The Making and Unmaking of the World's Newest State by Zach Vertin

An extraordinary journey into the rise and fall of the world's newest state.

We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World by Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai presents true stories of the refugee experience interwoven with her own story of her displacement.

Lights In The Distance: Exile and Refuge at the Borders of Europe by Daniel Trilling

Acclaimed journalist Daniel Trilling draws on years of reporting to build a portrait of the refugee crisis, seen through the eyes of the people who experienced it first-hand.

MYTH BUSTING The Truth About Asylum in the UK



Different pasts, shared futures

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

www.brassbedford.org.uk

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Headlines

“Refugees should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.”, Theresa May. (ITV news, 19 September 2016)

FACT: There is nothing in international law to say that refugees must claim asylum in the first country they reach. Neither the 1951 Refugee Convention nor EU law requires a refugee to claim asylum in one country rather than another (Amnesty International 2015). A European regulation allows a country such as the UK to return an adult asylum seeker to the first European country they reached. This means that countries on the edge of Europe have responsibility for a lot more asylum seekers

Asylum Seekers Are Paid More than British Pensioners (British National Party)

FACT: Pensioners in UK get £122.30 per week in the UK while the weekly allowance for asylum-seeker is £36.95. This is lower than many other EU countries. The equivalent weekly rate in France, for example, is £58.50.

“We need tougher policies to tackle bogus asylum seekers.”, (Daily Express 3 March, 2015)

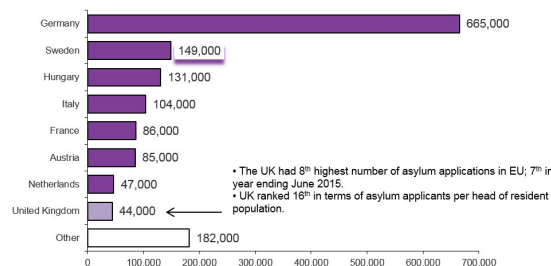
FACT: Illegal/bogus asylum seekers is a wrong definition, as seeking asylum is not illegal in the UK, there cannot be illegal asylum seekers. 60% of asylum cases are granted in this country, many do not stay the course of the complex legal processes often taking many years.

“Asylum seekers are linked to rising crime ” (Salford City Council, 1 October, 2015)

FACT: Asylum seekers are less likely to commit major crimes than British citizens, as this would affect their asylum application, as such they do not report incidents of sexual harassment and assaults, avoiding contact for fear of being picked up, put in detention and deported. In fact they are more likely to become victims of crime in the UK. A report by police chiefs concluded that vast majority of people seeking asylum are law-abiding citizens (Association of Chief Police Officers)

Britain accepted more asylum seekers than other EU countries (The Telegraph 12 May 2015).

FACT: Britain had the eighth highest amount of asylum seekers across the EU. Germany received 665,000 asylum seeker claims in the first half of 2016, by far the greatest number, followed by Sweden (149,000) and Hungary (131,000).



The Conservatives' Welsh leader claimed Britain was being "swamped" by asylum-seekers. (Mail on line, 16 November 2016)

Fact: Britain is 8th place in Europe per head of population for asylum applications. The vast majority of refugees end up in the Middle East and Africa.

“Thousands of failed asylum seekers claim benefits in UK”

(Express, 2 August, 2015)

FACT: Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or claim benefits. They can only receive £36.95 a week in subsistence allowance. In other European countries they are encouraged to work and pay taxes, thus being net contributors to the country while their asylum cases are assessed

Asylum seekers housed in hotel with spectacular sea views (Telegraph, 24th Sept 2014)

FACT: This does not mean asylum seekers live in luxury far from it; people have no say in where they live and are often left to survive on around £5 a day. (Refugee Council, 2017). The Home Affairs Select Committee has slammed the existing system for accommodating people seeking asylum as a disgrace and has called for the Government to take immediate action to rectify the situation. As some women and children seeking asylum in the UK were found to be living in filthy, overcrowded and potentially dangerous conditions. (Guardian, 2016).