

→ Mythbuster -- 06 of 12

→ Are asylum seekers illegal immigrants?

→ No. Under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees anyone has a legal right to seek asylum in the UK and remain in the country for the duration of their asylum claim.

→ Mythbuster -- 05 of 12

→ Aren't all asylum seekers 'bogus'?

→ No. After appeals, over 50% of asylum applicants are found to be in need of protection. New arrivals in the UK are given a few days to complete a lengthy and detailed Statement of Evidence form in English, often with little assistance. Mistakes on this form can and have led to applications being turned due to bureaucratic technicalities.

The Home Office routinely decides that some asylum applications are without merit. This could be because the asylum seeker's country of origin is deemed to be safe.

→ Mythbuster -- 08 of 12

→ Asylum seekers don't contribute anything, do they?

→ Refugees and asylum seekers have a huge variety of skills and, given the opportunity to work, make significant contributions to the economy and culture of the UK.

A recent Home Office report shows that people born outside the UK, including asylum seekers, contribute 10% more to the economy in taxes and national insurance than they consume in benefits and public services - equivalent to a boost to the economy of £2.6 billion in 1998/99.

→ Mythbuster -- 07 of 12

→ If they don't come here legally then they're bogus

→ UK law make it extremely difficult for individuals to legally access the asylum system. For example:

- visa restrictions have been imposed on many countries even though it is difficult for people fleeing persecution to obtain necessary documentation. Simply applying for a passport in their home country may put their lives at risk, let alone visiting a foreign embassy to apply for a visa.

The fact that someone has arrived here illegally does not undermine the credibility of their claim - the reverse is often true. Desperate people fleeing persecution may need to resort to such measures in order to seek asylum. In doing so, they risk extortion, exploitation and physical harm.

→ Mythbuster -- 10 of 12

→ Do asylum seekers get more money than pensioners?

→ No. Asylum seekers are only entitled to the equivalent of 70% of basic income support. A single asylum seeker receives £37.77 a week paid in vouchers, which they can now exchange for cash.

Currently the level of income support (minimum income guarantee) for single older people is £98.15 and the full state pension for a single person is £75.50 per week.

→ Mythbuster -- 09 of 12

→ Don't asylum seekers take much-needed council homes?

→ Asylum seekers are not entitled to be included on council housing lists. Accommodation is provided by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), a Home Office department. It is only offered outside London and the South-East and asylum seekers have no choice over their destination.

When an asylum seeker is given refugee status or exceptional leave to remain they are entitled to apply for council housing if they are in priority need, like everyone else in the UK.

→ Mythbuster -- 11 of 12

→ Should all asylum seekers be detained?

→ The UK detains more asylum seekers than any other European state. Asylum seekers can be detained at any time, for any reason and with no time limits.

Detaining all asylum seekers is contrary to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees guidelines and may contravene UK Human Rights Act 2000. Detention is also extremely expensive. The Government estimates that detaining all asylum seekers on arrival could cost £2 billion in start-up costs, with annual running costs of over £1 billion.

→ Mythbuster -- 12 of 12

→ They are different and will swamp our culture!

→ Generally speaking it is absurd for people in the rich world to claim they are having their culture swamped by refugees; the numbers entering are so small compared with local populations. In some cases, though, local authorities have settled large numbers of refugees in a small area and this has created problems, especially if the area is already economically deprived or lacking in services.

Communities that have been left behind by New Labour may then end up targeting asylum seekers, who aren't responsible for poor investment.