

Government makes no provision for refugees in English language classes report

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) published its equality impact assessment on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), but included no specific mention of provision for refugees and asylum seekers. Donna Covey, Chief Executive of the Refugee Council said:

“We are extremely disappointed that the government makes no specific recommendations about funding for refugees and asylum seekers to access English classes in its report today.

“We are very concerned that many

refugees will no longer be able to learn and gain qualifications in English language following cuts to ESOL provision. Refugees with childcare responsibilities, a disability that means they can't work, or who are in low paid jobs will be faced with paying 50% of ESOL course fees from 1 August 2011, and a majority will therefore miss out. This is a dangerous situation that will lead refugees to become more excluded, unable to use other skills they may have and relying increasingly on their children or community members to interpret for

them. Expecting asylum seekers to cover half their course fees whilst denying them the right to work is completely unacceptable.

“If the government is serious about the Big Society and supporting some of the most excluded people to play a part then it must make sure every refugee who needs ESOL support can get it. The government cannot rely on the already decimated voluntary sector to pick up the pieces.”

Source: Refugee Council

Office Accommodation for Refugee Groups

Northern Quarter

Affordable office space available in the Northern Quarter for voluntary organisations. Can accommodate anything from 2 people up to 20/35 (dependant on requirements).

Meeting room & PC Suite available in a great location with excellent transport links for easy access for training of volunteers. Flexible terms for hire of office space – one day to one/three month available.

Contact the Alison on 0161 833 8800 or email alisonryan@thewo.org.uk

Central Manchester

Back on Track has office accommodation available in Manchester city centre to rent to charities or social enterprise organizations. There are two offices for 3 to 4 people (£75 per week) and one large room which could serve as a training room or an office for up to 12 (£170 per week). The offices are located in Swan Buildings in the Northern Quarter, a charming Victorian building which is home to 9 other charities.

To find out more please contact David Fisher at Back on Track on david@backontrackmanchester.org.uk

Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) goes into administration

After Refugee and Migrant Justice last year, IAS, so far the largest provider of legal aid services in the asylum and immigration sector in UK went into administration on 11th July 2011. There are hundreds of distressed and bewildered people in Manchester now looking for alternative legal representation. If you are in contact with someone who had a case with IAS and they have a deadline for an appeal, permission hearing, or a judicial review please ring Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

on 0161 740 7722 immediately and they will advise you what to do. There is also guidance on IAS's website <http://www.iasuk.org/home.aspx> with instructions about where to send letters to ask for an adjournment or extension. If someone has a case with IAS and there is no deadline you can either ring the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit on 0161 740 7722, or go to the drop-in Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, 1 Delaunays Road, Crumpsall Green, Manchester, M8 4QS.

New customer facilities at UKBA – Liverpool

Since 18th July, the UKBA – Liverpool customer reception facilities formerly in Reliance House have moved to The Capital Building, 6 Union Street, Liverpool,

L3 9AF. Clients are seen by appointment only. For further clarifications and directions to the new premises, please follow the link below:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2011/july/15-move-to-the-capital>

Funding

The Seed Fund

The Seed Fund is a partnership between the Community Foundation, The Oglesby Charitable Trust, Bruntwood Estates and the Hogben Family Trust.

This Fund is suitable for newly established community groups and projects that have been in existence for less than one year and that aim to improve the lives of those living in Manchester. The Seed Fund does not support larger organisations with a turnover of more than £5,000 a year. The Seed Fund's current funding priority is to encourage and support grass-root community activity. This means small, community-based and locally controlled, newly and emerging groups that have been in existence for less than one year. These groups need to be able to manage themselves, encourage active participation from volunteers, have minimal cash reserves and limited access to funding support. The fund can also support individuals who have an idea to help others in the community. The maximum grant request that will be considered is £1,000.

Priority is given to projects that:

- Are run by local volunteers who wish to improve the circumstances of individuals and communities in economically/socially excluded and/or deprived areas of Greater Manchester
- Have been in existence for less than 12 months and who are working towards formalising the group/organisation
- Do not have access to a professional fundraiser and experience difficulty in attracting funding from other sources
- Encourage involvement of local residents in improving, designing, identifying and implementing community activities
- Promote voluntary participation and social inclusion as well as community involvement and self-help
- Meet and demonstrate an emerging or immediate need and serve to build the community's awareness
- Do not duplicate an existing provision or service

For further information and to apply, contact 0161 214 0940, or email: enquiries@communityfoundation.co.uk.

Deadline: Applications can be submitted at any time.

Reaching Communities – Feedback on applications

Here's an interesting article we have found about the Big Lottery Fund programme Reaching Communities.

The article, by Sophie Hudson at Third Sector Online, features Paul Jones, the Big Lottery Fund head of region for Yorkshire and the Humber, talking about how many applications are received a week that are incomplete and how many completed applications are put through to the next stage. It also talks about what types of projects the Fund are keen to support, and the reluctance to support larger projects, which he defined as projects asking for more than £100,000 a year. To read the article visit the Third Sector website.

Website: www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/rss/article/1078553/Half-Reaching-Communities-applications-are-incomplete

Innovation Grants Programme from the Money Advice Trust

The Money Advice Trust, supported by the Nationwide Building Society, is offering the Innovation Grants Programme to improve the money advice sector. Grants from £1,000 – £30,000 are available, with higher amounts being available in some instances.

The priorities for 2011 are:

- The development of new information and resources that can be shared with others
 - The testing of support groups for clients or advisers
 - Work with people who are usually excluded from society
 - Projects which combine money advice and financial capability
 - Work which will assist those who are homeless or facing homelessness.
- The funder wishes to fund innovative and original work and will fund single items, groups of items and projects. They will not fund the core costs of providing money and debt advice.

Deadline: 1 September 2011

Contact: Emily Hopkins

Telephone: 020 7653 9734

Email: grants@moneyadvicetrust.org

Website: www.moneyadvicetrust.org/content.asp?ssid=119

People's Postcode Trust

The Trust distributes funds to small organisations, community groups and registered charities. Funding is available for 3-month projects ranging from £500 up to £10,000 in Scotland and England, and up to £5,000 in Wales. Funding is awarded to projects with one or more of the following aims:

- To prevent poverty
- To promote, maintain, improve and advance health
- To advance citizenship or community development
- To advance public participation in sport

- To promote, improve and advance human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation

- To promote and advance environmental protection or improvement

For more information please visit:

http://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/?dm_i=I6P,HSJZ,31R239,1GDR5,1

Deadline for applications: 15 August 2011

New funding available for community IT projects

UK Online Centres have grants of up to £5,000 to fund organisations wishing to develop their outreach activity, reach new audiences or communities and help people take their first steps online. This is supported by Nominet Trust.

Deadline for applications: 19 August 2011, with projects taking place between September 2011 and 31 March 2012.

BT Community Connections

Currently there are nine million people in the UK who have never used the internet. BT Community Connections is an award scheme which offers community groups the chance to get online and help people discover the wonders of the internet. If your group helps the community access the internet and improves people's ICT skills, you could be eligible to apply for a year's free broadband. The scheme is now open. For more information: <http://www.btplc.com/Responsiblebusiness/Supportingourcommunities/Digitalinclusion/BTCommunityConnections/ApplyingforaCommunityConnectionsAward/index.htm>

Deadline for applications: 15 September 2011.

Homelessness Transition Fund Now Open

The £20 million Homelessness Transition Fund, supported by the Department of Communities and Local Government and administered by Homeless Link, is now open for applications. Grants of up to £250,000 are available to protect and enhance services that help stop single homeless people sleeping rough in England. Voluntary sector organisations, charities and social enterprises that spend most of their income on homelessness are eligible to apply. Consortiums of organisations, which are led by a homelessness agency, may also apply. Priority will be given to organisations that spend more than 50% of their income on addressing single homelessness.

Examples on the website of costs covered include the redesigning or developing of services, expert advice, support and training or new partnerships and mergers. Grants will also be awarded to support the introduction of the standard 'No Second Night Out' to end rough sleeping and other innovations.

Grants to help pilot new ways of working that will help to end homelessness and make services more efficient are also available.

This fund is aimed at services that have been affected by the reduction in public spending and applications should highlight how the application relates to the transition of services.

Deadline: 30 September 2011

Contact: Homelessness Transition Fund

Email: fund@homeless.org.uk

Website: www.homeless.org.uk/fund

Events

Multiagency Forum (MAF)

MARIM is organising the next MAF where a number of speakers will deliver varied and interesting talks and workshops, including the NHS Reform, the 'Settled In' report of Greater Manchester Migrant Workers Pay and Employment Rights Advisory Services, AFRUCA's work in promoting the rights and welfare of African Children, Mental Health support for refugees and asylum seekers in Oldham, CAB's advice work in the City, and Refugee Into Teaching Resources and current services.

Date: 14 September 2011

Time: 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

Venue: Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount Street Manchester M2 5NS

To book a place email:

e.araya@manchester.gov.uk

Job Opportunity

Refugee Services Assistant at the British Red Cross

The British Red Cross cares for people in crisis at home and abroad, meeting the needs of vulnerable people in times of emergency.

The refugee services assistant is responsible for providing efficient and reliable administrative and support functions to staff of the Refugee Service. The post-holder will undertake a range of administrative duties such as maintaining databases, ordering and processing financial paperwork. The post-holder will assist with the co-ordination of meetings and training courses and will administer the volunteer recruitment and selection process.

Applicants for this post should be educated to GCSE level or equivalent by experience with excellent literacy, numeracy and IT skills and should have demonstrable experience of working in an office environment. The successful candidate will ensure the smooth running of the projects offered by Refugee Services by working effectively with staff, volunteers and service users. Applicants should have an awareness and understanding of refugee issues and good communication and organisational skills are essential. Occasional travel and out-of-hours working may be necessary. As part of its Recruitment and Selection procedures the British Red Cross undertakes criminal record checking of all individuals who regularly work with or have access to children and vulnerable adults. This post is on fixed term contract until September 2013 and is supported by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund.

For further information and to apply, visit: www.redcross.org.uk/vacancies, or contact 0177 270 7329, or email: recruitmentpreston@redcross.org.uk for an electronic application pack.

To request a paper application, send a stamped addressed envelope to: British Red Cross Recruitment, 11-14 Pittman Court, Pitman Way, Preston, PR2 9ZG.

Hours: 17.5 per week

Salary: £5569 - £7245 per annum

Location: Manchester

Deadline: Fri, 02/09/2011 (All day)

Volunteering opportunity

Combining To Care In Manchester

Combining to Care is a partnership between the public, private and charity sectors in Manchester working together to help improve the lives of pensioners.

We have volunteers from corporate volunteering schemes looking for placements which help older people.

If your organisation could make use of volunteers, from just the one to several on a particular day, either for a one-off activity or perhaps on a regular basis, please get in touch. In addition, we may be able to help with volunteering opportunities which help older people where a longer, or regular commitment would be required.

To find out more please call Lesleyjane Clifford on 01502 504095 or by email lesleyjane.clifford@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

Training/ Workshops

Creating Changes FREE training

Creating Changes is a project offering free community development training to a wide range of local support and development organisations, so that they can improve their practice in supporting small groups and networks.

Creating Changes Community Development Practice sharing workshops are one day reflective action learning events. Aimed at people who are interested in continuing their learning about community develop tools and methods for supporting small community groups whilst developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to use participative approaches in facilitating informal community development learning. You could be a member of a group or someone who supports or manages small groups using community development approaches.

This workshop is particularly aimed at participants who have been part of any of the Creating Changes courses or demonstration projects, but we do have some spaces available for community activists, managers and paid and unpaid workers who, within their ongoing roles, support the learning, development and actions of small groups and networks. Workers do not need to be generic Community Development Workers.

Training events will be updated onto www.fcdl.org.uk when they are confirmed in different parts of England.

Currently the following (1 day) FREE Creating Changes workshop has been confirmed in Manchester:

Practice Sharing Workshop: Supporting Critical Analysis within Community Group Work
Course Code PS

Date: Friday 23 September 2011

Time: 9.30am - 4pm

**Venue: St. Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ
Tel. 0161 277 1030**

For more information, criteria and booking:

www.fcdl.org/events/current-events/226-course-ps-september-23-2011-more-information

2011 First Quarter Asylum statistics

Asylum Applications:

The number of applications for asylum, excluding dependants, was 11 per cent higher in Q1 2011 (4,845) compared with Q1 2010 (4,355). This represents the first quarter since Q2 2009 for which the number of applications is higher than the quarter a year earlier.

Including dependants, the estimated number of applications to the EU27 countries increased by 1 per cent in Q1 2011 (58,300) compared with Q1 2010 (57,600). Based on Q1 2011 data, the UK occupies the 12th rank in the EU space in terms of receiving asylum seekers per head of the population.

Initial Decisions:

In Q1 2011, 4,895 initial asylum decisions were made, excluding dependants, a decrease of 10 per cent compared with Q1 2010 (5,445).

22 per cent of initial decisions in Q1 2011 were to grant asylum compared with 15 per cent in Q1 2010. 8 per cent of initial decisions were to grant Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL) compared with 10 per cent in Q1 2010. 71 per cent of initial decisions in Q1 2011 were refusals compared with 76 per cent in Q1 2010.

Asylum Appeals:

2,880 asylum appeals were received in Q1 2011, 23 per cent lower than Q1 2010 (3,750).

The number of asylum appeals determined decreased by 27 per cent in Q1 2011 (3,025) from Q1 2010 (4,120).

The proportion of appeals dismissed was 69 per cent in Q1 2011, whilst 28 per cent of appeals were allowed. The remainder of appeal determinations were withdrawals.

Asylum support applications:

The number of applications for asylum support in Q1 2011 was 3,340, 11 per cent lower than Q1 2010 (3,730).

In Q1 2011, 2,620 (78 per cent of the total) applications were from single adults and 720 (22 per cent of the total) from family groups.

Supported asylum seekers including dependents

The total number of asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support at the end of Q1 2011 (21,935) was 20 per cent lower than at the end of Q1 2010 (27,455).

3,125 asylum seekers were receiving subsistence only support.

18,100 asylum seekers were supported in dispersal accommodation.

715 asylum seekers were supported in initial accommodation.

Enforcement and voluntary return of asylum seekers and irregular migrants

In Q1 2011, 14,225 persons were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, 5 per cent lower than in Q1 2010 (15,040).

Of those leaving in Q1 2011, 3,820 persons were initially refused entry at port (21 per cent lower than in Q1 2010), 5,585 were enforced removals and notified voluntary departures (9 per cent higher than in Q1 2010).

875 persons left under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes (38 per cent lower than in Q1 2010), and 3,945 were other voluntary departures (8 per cent higher than in Q1 2010).

Enforcement and voluntary return of asylum seekers

In Q1 2011, 2,475 principal applicants were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK, 8 per cent lower than in Q1 2010 (2,700).

Including dependants, 2,600 asylum seekers were removed or departed voluntarily from the UK in Q1 2011, 9 per cent lower than in Q1 2010 (2,870).

640 asylum seekers left under Assisted Voluntary Return schemes in Q1 2011 (575 principal applicants and 65 dependants), 26 per cent lower than Q1 2010 (865).

145 asylum seekers left via other types of voluntary departures in Q1 2011, 49 per cent lower than in Q1 2010 (290).

Detention

A total of 7,015 people entered detention, held solely under Immigration Act powers in Q1 2011, 2 per cent higher than in Q1 2010 (6,895). Of these, 3,215 (46 per cent of the total) were asylum detainees, 8 per cent lower than in Q1 2010 (3,485).

Of the 7,015 people entering detention in Q1 2011, 4,740 (68 per cent of the total) entered UK Border Agency Removal Centres and 2,275 (32 per cent of the total) entered UK Border Agency Short Term Holding Facilities.

10 children entered detention, held solely under Immigration Act powers, in Q1 2011 compared to 229 in Q1 2010. Of these 10, 8 were asylum detainees compared to 179 in Q1 2010.

For further details and full report follow the link:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/immigration-asylum-research/control-immigration-q1-2011-t/control-immigration-q1-2011view=Binary>

MRSN Advice Centre

129 Princess Road, Moss Side, Manchester M4 4RB.

Mondays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm – Drop in sessions

Tuesdays – Appointments only

Wednesdays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm – Drop in sessions

We can usually arrange advice in Arabic, Swahili and Somali, and with our dedicated volunteer interpreters in French, Kurdish, and Farsi.

To arrange an appointment you can call at the advice centre on Mondays or phone us on 0161 868 0777