

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill is the latest immigration legislation to be presented to Parliament. It is currently being considered by the House of Lords, and will shortly (possibly in May) be passed to the House of Commons for consideration. When the Bill becomes law, it is intended to make a number of changes that will affect refugees and asylum-seekers.

Citizenship and permanent residence:

There are to be changes to how people may become British citizens or obtain permanent residence (currently called indefinite leave). Currently, someone who has been recognised as a refugee or granted humanitarian protection can apply for permanent residence (indefinite leave) after 5 years of being granted his or her status. After a further year, he or she may apply for British citizenship.

The Bill would change this. Someone in this situation would need to apply to extend his or her refugee or humanitarian protection status after 5 years. If that application was accepted, he or she would then be called a 'probationary citizen'. However, the status and entitlements would be no different than during the previous 5 years. After a period as a probationary citizen, he or she could apply for British citizenship. This period as a probationary citizen might last between one and 3 years. The period varies because the Government intends that migrants, including refugees, who want to become British citizens should do voluntary work, otherwise the time to become British may be slower.

Someone who does not want to become a British citizen, but wants to become a permanent resident, will have to be a probationary citizen for between 3 and 5 years.

Other changes:

The way by which removals (and other Home Office decisions where there is no right of appeal) can be challenged is to be changed. Currently, these sorts of decisions can be challenged by judicial review to the High Court. The Government



Forum campaigners with Alan Manning, TUC; Maurice Littlewood, Rochdale Trades Council; Cllr Basil Curley, Manchester City Council

intend that some or all of these sorts of challenges should be transferred to the tribunal system, where they may be dealt with by a High Court judge or by one of the senior immigration judges in the tribunal.

There is to be a new duty upon the Home Office in respect of children's welfare. This will require the Home Office to give further consideration to how its practices and policies affect children.

The Home Office is to be given increased powers, particularly to immigration officers at ports of entry to the UK. Much of the debate on these powers has highlighted allegations of serious abuse by immigration officers and private contractors, particularly during forced removals. The Bill provides an opportunity, which so far the Government is resisting, to make immigration officers and private contractors subject to guidance and independent investigation in line with similar guidance and investigations that affects police officers.

What can you do about this?

There is to be a meeting about the Bill at MRSN on Thursday 2nd April 11.30 to 1.30pm. Now is the time to make representations to your local MP about concerns that relate to this Bill. More information about this will be available at the meeting or in the meeting notes available at www.mrsn.org.uk/forum/events.html.

MRSN Volunteers win awards

Manchester's first BME Volunteer Award ceremony was held on 24 March, 2009 to celebrate and encourage volunteering within Manchester's black and minority ethnic communities. MRSN volunteers won in two categories: Elinah Mugwagwa (left), long standing MRSN finance volunteer and Chair of the Refugee and Migrant Forum won the Leadership award. Sadiya Hassan (right), loyal MRSN advice and health advocacy volunteer, won the Commitment award. It was hard to pick out 2 volunteers to nominate from all the volunteers who contribute so much to MRSN. The fact that they both won their categories reflects the quality and commitment of all MRSN volunteers – congratulations to our winners and a big thank you to all our volunteers for their vital contribution to MRSN's work.



Funding News

Changes to Awards for All England programme

The Big Lottery Fund has announced changes to the small grants scheme when it ends in March 2009.

From the 1st April 2009 the Big Lottery Fund, Sport England, Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund will run their own small grants programmes.

The Big Lottery Fund will launch a new small grants programme awarding grants of £300 to £10,000 to local communities. Sport England will provide small grants for sports from £300 to £10,000.

Arts Council England will provide small grants between £1,000 and £100,000 through their 'Grants for the arts' programme. Heritage Lottery Fund will provide small grants between £3,000 and £50,000 through their 'Your Heritage' scheme and £3,000 to £25,000 through their 'Young Roots' scheme.

For further information, visit: www.biglotteryfund.org

Lloyds TSB Foundation

Priorities/details: The Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales is one of the UK's leading grant-makers and funds small and medium underfunded charities working at the heart of communities to tackle disadvantage across England and Wales.

Who for? The Community Programme focuses on core work and project funding that helps disadvantaged people to play a fuller role in the community, particularly where that is achieved through improving social and community involvement; improving life choices and chances or helping people to be heard. Michele Lester, Lloyds TSB Foundation Grant Manager for Merseyside, Cheshire and South Manchester commented, 'We recognise the fantastic work being done by the voluntary sector in Tameside, and the Foundation is interested to hear from charities which can show they are delivering specific changes and benefits to the lives of disadvantaged people in the area.'

The Foundation does not fund activities for which local or central government are responsible.

Application process: A full list of exclusions and more information, together with an online eligibility check is available on the website www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk

For more information: Contact Michele Lester, Tel: 07500 787 750, Email: michele.lester@lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk

Last month, the government launched 'Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities and Social Enterprises', which pledged £42.5 million to help those that need it most during the global economic downturn. This will come in the form of targeted packages of support, including measures to help voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises step up advice, support and volunteering in the areas that need it most across the country. Details of the initiatives are: £10 million investment in a Volunteer Brokerage scheme for unemployed people, creating 40,000 opportunities for people to learn new skills and give back to communities through volunteering £15.5 million Community Resilience Fund providing funding to small/medium sized providers in communities most at risk of increased deprivation, due to the recession £16.5 million modernisation fund to help with the cost of mergers, partnerships and sharing of back office functions for at least 3,000 third sector organisations Development of a School for Social Entrepreneurs A national campaign to raise awareness of the Government's commitment to pay invoices within 10 days, which will improve cash flow to small organisations

For more information visit the Office of the Third Sector website at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector

Grassroots Grants

Priorities/details: Grassroots have recently announced an increase in the turnover restriction from £20,000 to £30,000, meaning that even more groups can now apply!

Who for? Voluntary and community groups established for at least two years, and with a turnover of not more than £30,000.

Application process: Application forms are available from the Community

Foundation for Greater Manchester.

Deadline: Ongoing.

Further information: Tel: 0161 214 0940, www.communityfoundation.co.uk

Sport England

Priorities/details: a new funding strategy will come into place from April 2009. There will be four open access funding streams and regular themed funding rounds to meet the specific needs of community sport.

- Sportsmatch, where private sector funding will be matched by funding from Sport England.
- Innovation fund for groups that identify or pilot new ways of supporting grassroots sports.
- Capital funding for projects that promote a more sustainable approach to community facilities.
- Small grants of between £300 and £10,000.

More details can be found in their document Funding Sport in the Community.

Who for? Grassroots and community sports level organisations.

Application process: Application forms are available online.

Further information: Helpline Tel: 0845 8508 508, email: info@sportengland.org www.sportengland.org/index/get_funding/how_funding_works.htm

Volunteering

Volunteering services offered by the University of Manchester's Volunteering and Community Engagement team

The University of Manchester's Volunteering and Community Engagement team would like to introduce you to two free services it can offer you to help you recruit the volunteers you need for your projects:

- One-off projects – they can provide you with a number of students to complete a project in a short period of time (e.g. gardening, clean sweeps, coffee mornings and/or painting and decorating).

- Advertising longer term volunteer opportunities to their students (e.g. befriending schemes, volunteer youth worker, planning Christmas parties etc.).

If you are interested in promoting any opportunities you have to their students please don't hesitate to contact: volunteer@manchester.ac.uk or phone: 0161 275 2828.

Volunteering Opportunity – Cheetham United Project

Cheetham United Project is a drop-in centre helping to meet mental health needs in the Cheetham area.

The centre is based at St Johns Church on Waterloo Road, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, and is staffed by a team of dedicated volunteers.

Volunteer tasks include setting up the equipment, and putting these items away after the session; providing food and refreshments to visitors; befriending and supporting visitors.

For further information, contact Teamirat on 07983 981762, or email rahtam98@yahoo.com

Job Opportunity

Volunteering Champion – GMCVO

Salary Scale: NJC equivalent: Points 41 – 44, £34,207 – £36,838 [2008/9] (pay award 09/10 pending), plus 7% pension contribution.

This project will cover the ten districts of Greater Manchester, and involve a partnership of volunteering service providers, including volunteer centres; local infrastructure organisations; and diversity organisations.

Its aim is to increase volunteering, especially amongst non-traditional groups and people with support needs, and to improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of volunteering infrastructure.

For an application pack, visit: www.gmcvo.org.uk/vacancies

or contact Anne-Marie Wroe on 0161 277 1003, email: anne-marie.wroe@gmcvo.org.uk

Deadline for application: **22 Apr 2009**

Employment Opportunities with Independent Choices

The Women's Safety Service at Independent Choices, Greater Manchester provides support to women whose partners or ex-partners attend the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme (IDAP) run by the Greater Manchester Probation Service.

They are currently recruiting for the following posts:

Women's Safety Service Manager, Salary Scale: £26,784 to £30,546, NJC Points 32 to 37, Hours: 35 hours per week including evenings and weekends.

Women's Safety Workers – 1 full-time and one .5 post, Salary Scale: £22,001 to £24,402, NJC Points 26 to 29 plus on call enhancements, Hours: 35 hrs & 17.5 hours per week including evenings and weekends.

The closing date for both posts is:

Monday 27th April.

For further information, please see below. For an application pack, contact Allison Dawes at: a.dawes@dlp.org.uk

Resources

Community Network for Manchester

Community Network for Manchester is a collection of voluntary and community sector groups that exists to find new ways of enabling people to participate in Manchester's economic, social and cultural life.

We provide a clear, open and accountable structure that enables voluntary and community sector groups to participate in ways that are appropriate to them.

We lead on the provision of information and communication between the Third Sector and the Manchester Partnership.

We create and increase the opportunities for voluntary and community sector groups to participate in decision making and influence service delivery.

We develop links between voluntary and community sector groups and promote collaborative working that supports a thriving and sustainable Third Sector in Manchester.

We give policy and development support to voluntary and community sector groups in Manchester.

New website features

We have added new features to our website which allows community groups to upload their community events, meetings, news, volunteering and training opportunities, etc. All you need to do is fill in a simple online registration form.

On our website you can also find information about our networks, useful resources and up-to-date information on employment, volunteering, training, tender and consultation opportunities.

If you are interested in learning more about Community Network for Manchester, please contact the team on 0161 234 2916.

Events

Let Them Work Campaign – Refugee and Migrant Forum Manchester

Let Them Work is a national campaign led by the TUC and the Refugee Council in partnership with a range of national and regional organisations across the U.K.

Over the coming months the Refugee and Migrant Forum Manchester will be running two campaign meetings:

Date/ Time: Tuesday 28th April, 6:00pm – 7:45pm,

Venue: Main Hall at Friends Meeting House.

Date/ Time: Tuesday 2nd June, 6:00pm – 7:45pm,

Venue: Main Hall at Friends Meeting House.

For further information about the campaign, visit: <http://www.mrsn.org.uk/letthemwork/>.

If you would like to attend, please contact Sophie King, Forum Development Worker on [forum@mrsn.org.uk](mailto:mrsn.org.uk), or phone: 0161 232 7420.

Refugee and Migrant Forum Manchester

The Refugee and Migrant Forum Manchester has been granted 3 years funding from the Reaching Communities programme at the Big Lottery Fund!

“This is wonderful news for all the forum members and for refugee communities across Greater Manchester. This feels like a reward for us and for our supporters, for everyone’s hard work and dedication in raising awareness with our communities and with service providers and policy makers about the rights, needs and aspirations of asylum seekers and refugees and for the changes we have brought to Dallas Court reporting centre. I hope that our leadership programmes over the next three years will bring even more positive outcomes for all communities in Greater Manchester”
Elinah Mugwagwa, Chair

Let Them Work

Well done everyone for a very successful public launch on 6th March with both Manchester and Salford city councils pledging their support for the Let Them Work campaign, and a live interview with two Forum members on BBC Radio Manchester.

The campaign, led nationally by the TUC and the Refugee Council, asks for permission to work for all asylum seekers who have been in the UK for six months or longer.

Cllr Brian Lloyd of Oldham Council also pledged his individual support and committed to raising a motion for debate within the council, while the Rt Reverend Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hulme, announced the General Synod’s motion of support for the campaign. Throughout the

event, individual attendees pledged their support for the campaign online and Forum members collected over 40 pledges of support from organisations.

Detention: Call for evidence

Thanks to everyone who supported the Forum’s collection of evidence about detention in Greater Manchester. Eight interviews have been conducted and negotiations about the findings are underway with the UK Border Agency Enforcement and Compliance team. Forum evidence gathering is ongoing.

Sanctuary Fridays

MRSN, Women Asylum Seekers Together, BOAZ Trust and Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit have set up a pilot partnership project in the ‘SANCTUARY’ building behind Dallas Court reporting centre on Fridays.

The aim of the project – which will be operating on a Friday only – is to ensure that legal representatives and key contacts are notified as soon as possible if someone has been detained after going to report. Those reportees who register with the project will have a team of volunteers ready to telephone any contacts that have been provided if someone fails to come out of Dallas Court after going in to report. Volunteers will also be able to sign post reportees to relevant support agencies and ensure they have the right information with them when they go in to Dallas Court, in the event that they are detained.

The room in the Sanctuary building has kindly been provided by the World Harvest Bible College.

Please contact the Forum Development Worker at MRSN for further information on any of the above initiatives or email forum@mrsn.org.uk.

Community Development Project



The project has continued to support refugee community organisations in Manchester, organized training course on Safeguarding African Children and organized a visit to Bristol to share experiences of wider community engagement while building group skills and knowledge around setting up and sustaining community food based projects.

The team has also supported, Manchester Bantu Welfare, Oromo Community in North West, Eritrean Community, Kurdish Society, Salford Welcome Group, United Libyan Community Association for Refugees, United Somali Bravanese Community and Hazara Community, with work including drafting a constitution, opening bank accounts, fundraising, setting up a new group and accessing office space. The Community Development Project will continue to address the needs of emerging groups/communities and that of established communities in Greater Manchester to be able to provide service for their communities.

If you know of any refugee community that needs help to set up or develop a group, please do refer them to us or if you are already an established group and need some support, do not hesitate to contact us on 0161 232 7420 or email; belay@mrsn.org.uk

RIES Advocacy Service

44 referrals have been made to the Advocacy Service in Zone A & B both in February and March. Eritreans remain to be the largest group with 5 client to date, and Iranians and Somali are the second largest groups.

32 new volunteers have taken the Advocacy Induction and Initial JSA Claiming training held in March 2008. 20 existing volunteers have also participated in the Advocacy and Communication Skills training. Since October 2008, the advocacy service has been covering a much wider area

– Greater Manchester and Blackburn with Darwen. We therefore welcome bi-lingual volunteers who speak Tigrina, Amharic, Farsi, Somali, French, Korean, Kurdish, Arabic and Lingala to volunteer in the RIES Advocacy Service. English speaking volunteers can also apply to volunteer in our programme.