



Home Office

Immigration and Nationality Directorate
Asylum and Appeals Policy Directorate

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Our Ref
Your Ref
Date

9 October 2002

Dear Colleague

REVIEW OF THE GUIDELINES ON VOLUNTEERING FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Home Secretary announced on 23 July that he intended to review the operation of the guidelines in relation to volunteering for asylum seekers.

The Government wants all asylum seekers to use their time constructively while their case is considered – to keep busy, to learn new skills and to give something back to society.

The Government is keen that asylum seekers should play an active role in the welfare of their own communities by getting involved in volunteer work. By reviewing the guidelines governing the type of voluntary work asylum seekers can do we can ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to participation.

A copy of the existing guidance is attached. We would be very interested to hear views from those involved in the conference on how the guidelines might best be amended to encourage asylum seekers to take part in voluntary activity.

I hope to hear views during the course of the day or comments would be equally welcome, sent to me, at the Home Office, by 30 November.

Yours sincerely
Rachael Reynolds

RACHAEL REYNOLDS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

GUIDANCE ON UNDERTAKING VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY

We are keen to see asylum seekers and recognised refugees take an active interest in the welfare of their own communities and the local community by undertaking voluntary activity while they are in the UK. But it must be borne in mind that, in the case of asylum seekers, they may not be given the right to remain here. They should therefore not be led to believe that voluntary activity is regarded as a step towards refugee status being granted.

The following guidance may be of help when organisations consider offers of voluntary activity from asylum seekers.

- Care should be taken to ensure that the activity being undertaken by an asylum seeker is genuinely voluntary and amounts neither to employment nor to job substitution.
- We would not expect asylum seekers to be out of pocket as a result of volunteering. Reimbursement should be made for meal or travel costs actually incurred, not as a flat-rate allowance.

Note on Employment

We would not wish to give advice which might lay an organisation open to prosecution for employing asylum seekers illegally and there may be occasions where the position of an asylum seeker or an organisation is unclear. Whenever this is an issue, we would strongly recommend that the organisation seeks independent legal advice and this guidance should not be taken to be giving that legal advice.

Further enquiries about this notice may be made to:

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