

# Overview and Scrutiny

## Resettlement Service

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**Cherwell**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

# Let's Myth Bust

# MYTHS



Myth- "Asylum Seekers get lots of money and steal our jobs".

Fact- they are not allowed to work and get on average £45 a week and if in catered accommodation £8 a week.

Myth- : "We can't let everyone in just because they want to come here."

Fact- Most refugees don't want to come to the UK, with the majority staying in neighboring countries.

Myth- "Refugees should stay in the first safe country they reach."

Fact- There's no legal requirement for refugees to claim asylum in the first country they reach. The 1951 Refugee Convention, of which the UK is a signatory, states that people can seek asylum in any country they choose. Wouldn't you want choice for your family?

Myth- "The UK is already doing more than its fair share."

Fact- "The UK isn't 'overrun' with refugees and at the end of 2023, they made up around 0.6% of the UK population."

<https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/11-myths-and-misconceptions-about-refugees-debunked>



# Nationally and Internationally

- As off 30<sup>th</sup> September 24- 1.2 million Asylum Seekers were across the EU. This was a 5%increase on the previous year. However, a 5%decrease was reported for the UK.
- We are 5<sup>th</sup> place in Europe and just 8% of all Asylum claims for Europe.
- The asylum system cost in 23/24 - 5.4b and that was for everything, accommodation, appeals, subsistence, returns etc.
- In relation to asylum seekers %ratio to the population in the UK, we are 19<sup>th</sup> across Europe.
- At the end of September 2024, 97,170 asylum cases were waiting on a decision in the UK.
- At the end of September 2024, 38K Asylum Seekers were in hotels and 65K in dispersed accommodation.

Information from the Oxford University Migration Observatory  
January 25



# Immigration Statuses

- Asylum Seeker – waiting on an immigration decision
- Refugee status- 5 Years
- Humanitarian Protection – 5 Years
- ILR- No time limit
- Visas- 3 Years and can be extended
- Pre-settled for five years then can apply for EU settled
- ARE- All Appeals Rights Exhausted.

## Migrant

There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant. Migrants are generally people staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum seekers or refugees. They could be here for seasonal work or education.



# Asylum Seeker v Refugee

## Asylum Seeker

- No decision on asylum claim
- Temporarily placed in Home Office no choice accommodation
- No access to public funding or housing
- Accommodation can be a hotel or dispersed property
- Likely to have come through an illegal route or overstayed a visa.



## Refugee

- Recognised as a person fleeing persecution
- Entitled to all services including Universal Credit.
- Can rent privately and join the housing register
- Could be on a HO scheme such as UKRS
- Can travel internationally under certain schemes.
- In some cases, applied legally to come to the UK.



# Who do we work with?

We support refugees starting a new life in Cherwell. They are from all around the world and have been recognized by the UK government as in need of refuge.

Our families are mainly from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Syria.

Asylum Seekers are also placed in Cherwell and once they have received a positive immigration status, they become post decision refugees; we support them too.

Asylum Seekers in Cherwell are the responsibility of the Home Office. Our community and charitable organizations help support them as they are not entitled to housing or benefits.



# Positives

“Your dedication and kindness have truly made a significant difference in our lives, and we will always be grateful for your hard work and compassion during this challenging time.”

“I would highly recommend their services, and thank them for the wonderful support they have given me and my family”

- We are a passionate team of specialized experienced staff poached, recruited and seconded. We have three qualified social workers.
- Most of our families embrace the support, are eager to work, learn English and want to improve their families lives.
- They help enrich our communities and workforce- we have translators, a judge, college lecturer, dentist, scientist, chefs, seamstresses.
- The children especially the girls get a chance to go to school! The children have high aspirations



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# Freedom of Information

- We average around three to four asks a fortnight.
- The majority are around the use of “Tax Payers Money” on the groups we support.
- On average a FOI can take around eight hours and that can be without redaction.
- Unit 4 finance system is not set up for these and can be complicated to navigate all the spends with the limited narrative on a spend.
- Most are returned for an internal review despite the question slightly changing.
- The requests come through “what do they know” and all responses are published on the internet, instigating more asks.



# Plans for 2025!

## Business

Procure a cost-effective translation service.

Translate more materials to support understanding of services and entitlements such as Housing and Recycling.

Ensure the support delivered to families resettling continues to be provided by an experienced service.

## Communities

A Community Sports Activator is now in post. We can look to strengthen integration through more activities and sport, especially for children from all backgrounds.

Continue to work on surgeries and drops-in collectively with partners and organisations across Cherwell.



# How can you help?

- Volunteers are always needed-this could be for a coffee and chat to help with English skills.
- Reach out to us if your team need to work with a family, we can support.
- Think about how you communicate with our families, did they really understand despite telling you they did? Many won't admit they don't.
- Be patient, could you learn a new language, to function in the workplace? Offer translators we have them.
- Help us Myth Bust and get positive messages out there!

