

## IN HARD TIMES WE NEED TO SHOW INCREASED SOLIDARITY

Times are hard with news of more job losses every week. But in times of economic difficulty it becomes even more important to stand up for the most vulnerable in our society.

In hard times society expects everyone to pull their weight where they can. Yet asylum seekers are forced to live on hand-outs or sometimes nothing at all. We should give asylum seekers the chance to work so that they can support themselves. Why do we deny them this, then force them to bear the brunt of public hostility?

Asylum seekers, who fled persecution in their own countries looking for a place of safety, are among the most vulnerable in the UK. While they are here they want to work, to support themselves and their families, to pay taxes, and to contribute to the economy.

“ Employment is one of the best ways for a person who has suffered a traumatic upheaval to start the process of rebuilding their life. ”

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Let Them Work campaign welcomes your support to highlight the plight of people, seeking safety in our country, who are left in poverty when rejected by an asylum system which frequently is shown to make poor decisions.

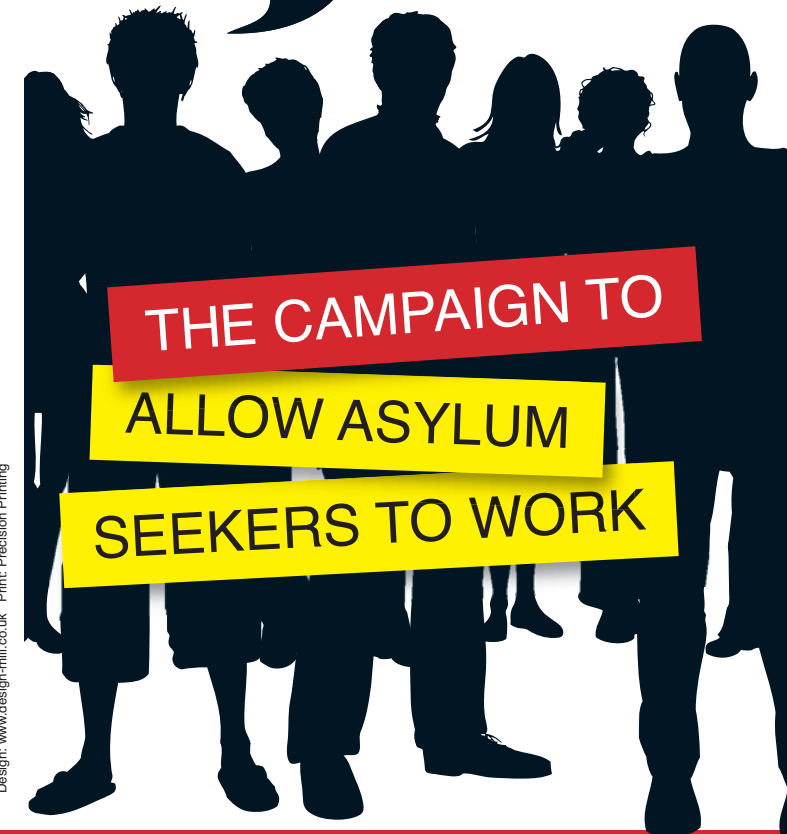
It is not acceptable in a civilised society that people are left destitute – not allowed to provide for themselves and their families. If you wish to help:

- Sign the campaign pledge which you can find on the Let Them Work website.
- Get your friends and neighbours to support the campaign and sign up to the pledge.
- Are you a member of a local organisation? A church, a union, your place of education? They can sign up too. Ask for a refugee to come to tell you more.
- Write to your MP and ask them to support the campaign and sign the pledge.
- Get your local political organisations (i.e. local council, trade union) to pass a motion of support and to sign up to the campaign pledge – they can do so by visiting the website.

The **Let Them Work** campaign is sponsored by: TUC, Refugee Council, Barnardo's, Still Human Still Here, Brighter Futures, Migrants Rights Network, STAR, Scottish Refugee Council, Welsh Refugee Council, and a number of Britain's trade unions.



LET  
THEM  
WORK



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**IN 2002 THE GOVERNMENT TOOK AWAY PERMISSION TO WORK FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM**

**It is inhumane to treat people in this way, and it makes no economic sense. Generally, asylum seekers are skilled and have a high level of education. Many are qualified nurses, teachers and academics. Others have been employed as journalists and civil servants in their home countries.**

**THEY ARE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT FROM BRITISH PEOPLE SO THEY CAN HAVE THE CHANCE TO WORK WHILE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH THE ASYLUM PROCESS**

It can still take many months and even years for someone's asylum claim to be finally decided. Even if your claim is refused it is often impossible to return home immediately, due to safety issues. People have to put their lives on hold and watch their skills and experience go to waste.

**WHATEVER A PERSON'S INDIVIDUAL SITUATION, IT MAKES NO SENSE TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM WORKING**

The cost to individuals and their families of not being allowed to work is high:

- **poverty**
- **worsening health**
- **social isolation**
- **exploitation – especially for women**
- **low self-esteem and loss of confidence.**

**ASYLUM SEEKERS COME TO THE UK IN SEARCH OF PROTECTION, NOT A JOB – BUT WHILE THEY ARE HERE THEY WANT TO WORK; THEY WANT TO CONTRIBUTE**

Employment is one of the best ways for a person who has suffered a traumatic upheaval to start the process of rebuilding their life. A paid job brings a sense of self respect and dignity. It is a way of meeting people and making friends, and it gives a person some control over their life. Employment also benefits wider society. It means people are able to support themselves and it brings people together.

**WHY CHANGE THE RULES NOW**

In a time of economic difficulty we need to remember the most vulnerable in our society. Asylum seekers are not a threat to our jobs and should have the same opportunity as everybody else to provide for their families and themselves.

Ignoring the problem will just increase the numbers of homeless and impoverished people on our streets and make a nonsense of the Government's commitment to strengthen community cohesion – and raise costs for all of us.

**IT IS TIME TO MAKE THE GOVERNMENT SEE SENSE AND LET THEM WORK**

Under the Thatcher government, people claiming asylum were allowed to work after six months. So it is not much to ask that a Brown government changes its current policy and gives them permission to work.

It is time to end a situation where skilled people who want to work are forced to live in poverty or destitution.