

Social and economic experiences of asylum seekers, migrant workers, refugees and overstayers in Barnsley

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Aims

The research aimed to provide data on the social and labour market experiences of new arrivals in Barnsley as a means of informing both the creation of resources to assist new arrivals and the development of a new integration strategy.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted with 46 new arrivals between July 2005 and July 2006 and with 24 representatives of local support agencies, trade unions and employers. 400 questionnaires were distributed to new arrivals with 113 responses.

Key issues

The article summarises findings of research into the social and economic experiences of asylum seekers, migrant workers, refugees and overstayers living in the Barnsley area. Experiences are marked by immigration status which affects entitlement to support. Migrant workers were less aware of support services or could not attend support groups due to working long hours. Changes of status were a source of anxiety, insecurity and uncertainty. Formal and informal networks are vital to the integration of new arrivals. Migrant workers may face particular challenges to integration, and may be isolated due to long hours spent in the workplace. Children may bear the primary responsibilities of arriving and integrating. There was a high disparity between the range of qualifications and experience new arrivals bring and the types of jobs people have been employed in, which reflects the local economy and labour market. Workers faced problems in working long hours for low pay, limiting non-work activities. Asylum seekers not allowed to work felt dislocated and powerless.

Conclusions

Migrant workers are less likely to access support services, have positive experiences of the local community or undertake learning. The contribution of new arrivals should not just be viewed in

economic terms; it comes in other forms such as social, cultural and community based contributions.

Recommendations

There is a need to develop support services to meet the needs of all new arrivals, with attention to transitions in entitlements with change of status.

Migrant Group

Asylum seekers

EU migrants

Undocumented

Topic

Integration

Labour conditions

Migrant workers

Work and education

Place

Barnsley

South Yorkshire

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Resource Type

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Resource

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