

Bulletin 24 October 2008

SDV News and events

Fundraising

Please remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online, particularly if you're buying insurance.

Check out the various ways of getting free funds on the site. You can raise over £2 for signing up to various services (pampers, forever friends, pixmania, financial times info service). I've done this and it does not result in loads of spam – you can always cancel as soon as your donation goes through!

Also remember easysearch – if you make 10 searches a day, you can raise £20 a year for SDV.

Find details of both easyfundraising and easysearch on the SDV website.

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Plan aims to end the detention of young in Dungavel

A more humane way of detaining children of failed asylum seekers will be signalled today by the UK Government with a £150,000 pilot scheme in Glasgow, designed to end youngsters' incarceration at Dungavel.

From early next year, up to four families at a time will be housed in separate ex-council flats in the city before they are sent back to their country of origin. Each will have access to basic household amenities such as a washing machine, fridge, furniture, and TV for around two weeks before they are repatriated.

Families will be able to come and go, but there will be some supervision, with regular checks by Borders and Immigration Agency officials and, possibly, social workers, so that any absconding should be detected early.

http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/news/display.var.2462542.0.Plan_aims_to_end_the_detention_of_young_in_Dungavel.php

Phil Woolas: Our asylum failure 'has spread misery and division'

The new Immigration Minister has condemned his own Government for the way it handled migration and asylum-seekers. Phil Woolas said the Government's failure to remove unsuccessful asylum applicants had caused misery and division within the country.

He also said the public lacked confidence in what the authorities did about

immigration because they correctly believed that the Government did not know what it was doing. He said: "Our failure to resource the asylum processes has caused untold human misery and division within our communities. My attitude to this issue is [that] I am going to clear the backlog because it is the right thing to do morally for asylum-seekers and the right thing to do for the country as a whole."

Officials are currently working through a backlog of 450,000 asylum cases uncovered when John Reid was Home Secretary. The latest asylum figures show that removals of failed asylum-seekers fell by 22 per cent to 21,705 last year as the Borders and Immigration Agency focused on removing foreign national prisoners from the country.

Within hours of making the comments, during a debate in London with the Dutch justice secretary, Mr Woolas issued a statement clarifying his remarks and saying that he was trying to put current successes in an "historical perspective".

He said that his criticism of the asylum system applied equally to Conservative governments. However, he admitted that Labour had failed to provide a proper policy for removing asylum-seekers.

Mr Woolas's comments came just a day after he backtracked on an interview in The Times in which he caused controversy by saying that the Government would set a limit on migration.

Yesterday Mr Woolas said he wanted to help immigrants to "help themselves become part of our society" and "earn" citizenship in Britain by integrating and learning English. He gave his full support for multiculturalism, which has come under sustained attack for discouraging integration. "Our starting point is that multiculturalism is a good thing," he said.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article4982700.ece>

Minister asks employers to opt for British workers

Employers are to be told not to hire migrant workers in an attempt by ministers to protect Britons from soaring unemployment. Phil Woolas, the immigration minister, said employers who preferred to take on migrants because they were "ready, willing and able" needed to hire unemployed British citizens instead.

"We are saying to them, 'We want your first thought and your first option to be retraining and upskilling of British people'," said Woolas yesterday.

His comments – prompted by fears of widespread unemployment caused by the global financial crisis – are a clear signal that ministers have finally ditched new Labour's controversial "open-door" immigration policy.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article4969325.ece>

Welfare groups condemn minister's pledge on migrants

Britain's new immigration minister was accused yesterday of leading a "baying pack" after he suggested the growing economic crisis could force a reduction in the number of migrants allowed into the UK.

In his first public statement in his new position, Phil Woolas conceded that immigration became an "extremely thorny" issue during an economic downturn when people already living in this country were losing their jobs. He also pledged the Government would respond by making it even harder for non-European Union nationals to come to Britain to work and live.

His warning was condemned by immigrant welfare organisations, who claimed the move towards quotas conflicted with the Government's settled policy on migration, which included the recently introduced "points-based" entry system. Keith Best, chief executive of the Immigration Advisory Service, said: "Whenever we face a recession, poor old migrants get the blame, but I don't think I was expecting a newly appointed minister to lead the baying pack."

Keith Vaz, Labour chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, said he would be astonished at a Labour immigration minister "in effect, changing the policy". "His predecessor and the Home Secretary have made it clear they do not support a quota," he said.

Immigration has consistently been a politically sensitive issue for New Labour for the past decade. Although a series of immigration reviews reduced numbers of new citizens settling in the UK every year, official figures show that the population grew by nearly two million - to almost 61 million people - between 2001 and 2007.

Mr Woolas has made it clear the Government will not allow it to continue rising without restraint, particularly with the economy in difficulties. "It's been too easy to get into this country in the past and it's going to get harder," he told The Times. "If people are being made unemployed, the question of immigration becomes extremely thorny. This Government isn't going to allow the population to go up to 70 million. There has to be a balance between the number of people coming in and the number of people leaving."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/welfare-groups-condemn-ministers-pledge-on-migrants-966240.html>

No right to accommodation for failed HIV asylum seeker

A South African failed asylum seeker who is HIV positive and homeless has no legal right to accommodation and community care services from a local council, the High Court said today in a test case. Referred to as "N" for legal reasons, the man has remained in the country in breach of immigration control.

In a ruling with wide implications for local authorities up and down the country having to deal with similar cases, a judge declared that Coventry City Council's refusal to help did not breach N's human rights.

Judge Neil Garnham QC, sitting at the High Court in London, said there was no breach because he could always return to his country of origin and seek help there.

His illness had not reached a critical stage making it inhuman treatment to expect him to go back, the judge ruled.

Legal experts said later the decision clarified the law and reflected recent House of Lords rulings indicating that "the UK cannot be expected to provide health services to the world".

<http://www.24dash.com/news/Housing/2008-10-17-No-right-to-accomodation-for-failed-HIV-asylum-seeker>

Other news and events

Get World-wise Taster Sessions

World-wise is an adult learning course for people who want to change the world but don't know where to start. World-wise is all about the power we have to make a difference on issues like climate change and international poverty. A ten-week World-wise course, open to anyone in Glasgow, will run from January 2009 where people learn about important global issues, talk about where we fit into the picture, discover how to influence decision-makers and develop the skills to bring people with us. Sessions cover areas like development basics, trade and climate justice, the Scottish Parliament, using the media and planning a campaign action.

Come along to a free 2 hour session for a taste of what it means to be World-Wise and a chance to meet people taking action on global issues, or tell your friends about it!

Monday 10th November, Mitchell Library 6.30 - 8.30pm
or

Wednesday 26th November, Langside Halls 6.30 - 8.30pm

Email Claire on clairewomble@gmail.com to reserve a space.

Train the Trainer Seminar, Saturday November 15th, 10.30am - 5.00pm, the Pearce Institute, 840 860 Govan Road, Govan, Glasgow, G51 3UU

Open to all asylum seekers and supporters interested in fighting anti-deportation campaigns

Aim of the Train-the-Trainer seminar

The aims of the anti-deportation campaign workshops we will be giving at this seminar include:

- Provide the basics of how to set up an anti-deportation campaign
- Encourage setting up a local anti-deportation campaign group / strengthen existing groups
- Some level of involvement in setting up some local anti-deportation campaigns
- Stimulate local anti-deportation activities
- Empowerment of asylum seekers / reversal of deskilling effect of existing "in limbo"

To apply for a place fill in application form at:

<http://www.ncadcttt.org.uk/content/view/11/4/>

Directions to the Pearce Institute at:

<http://www.pearceinstitute.org.uk/default.aspx>

Mandela/Tambo Lecture and ACTSA Scotland conference on links and solidarity, 25th October in Glasgow Caledonian University

ACTSA Scotland (Action for Southern Africa) is holding a conference on "Building Links and Solidarity with Southern Africa" on Saturday. The annual Mandela/Tambo lecture will form part of the conference.

The Mandela/Tambo Lecture will be given at 10.30am by the High Commissioner for Mozambique to the U.K., H.E. Antonio Gumende, on the subject "Solidarity and Partnerships in the 21st Century: the Challenge of Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Mozambique." There will be coffee before this at 10am and after it at 11.30am. This year's lecture is hosted by Glasgow Caledonian University, and the gathering will be welcomed by the Principal, Prof. Pamela Gillies.

The conference will then continue with sessions on Zimbabwe (with inputs from Tony Dykes, Director of ACTSA, and Fraternity Ndhela, a Zimbabwean activist currently living in Scotland, and contributions from others with first-hand experience of Zimbabwe); on Trade Justice, where ACTSA has been active especially in campaigning on Economic Partnership Agreements as they relate to Southern Africa; and on building links and solidarity with communities and organisations in Southern Africa. Cyril Ndaba, Deputy High Commissioner for South Africa, will contribute to this solidarity session, along with the other speakers, and there will be some input on ACTSA Scotland's specific links with Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and on ACTSA U.K.'s connections with civil society organisations in Swaziland and Zimbabwe. The intention is to have an opportunity for discussion in smaller groups about how links can be encouraged and assisted, as well as the main plenary sessions.

The conference will close at 4.30pm, and be followed by a reception for all those attending.

The cost of the conference is £10, or £5 for concessions, including lunch. Anyone attending only the lecture will not need to pay the conference fee, though donations would be very welcome.

For a place please contact: johnnelson48@yahoo.co.uk

A job you might be interested in: Positive Action in Housing, Project Officer (Casework & Outreach)

£21,251.41 per annum + 5% contributory pension scheme, 30 days annual leave + 15 days public holidays

We wish to recruit a caseworker to assist in providing a free, independent, multilingual and culturally sensitive outreach housing information and advice service for refugees, asylum seekers and minority ethnic communities in Glasgow.

You will undertake casework and provide information, advice and support to the client group through outreach surgeries and direct referrals. You will enjoy working with

people; have excellent interpersonal skills and preferably experience of carrying out casework for people in need. As well as English, you will be fluent in one of the following languages; Urdu, Punjabi, Kurdish, Farsi, Arabic, Somali, Swahili, Dari or Pashto. You will be able to write reports and have knowledge of social exclusion problems affecting minority ethnic/refugee communities. You will be computer literate, able to prioritise your work and be an effective and supportive team member.

Positive Action in Housing actively promotes equal opportunities throughout our jobs, services and activities and actively encourages applications from all sections of the community. Previous experience in a voluntary organisation is desirable.

Closing date: 12 noon Friday, 31st October 2008

Interviews to be held: week beginning 17th November 2008

Download an application pack at:

www.paih.org

Another job you might be interested in: Support worker, Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group

We are looking for a full time Support Worker to work with detainees at Brook House IRC, which is due to open next year at Gatwick. The main duties will include direct work with detainees, volunteer recruitment and training, partnership working with related groups and organisations, assisting with fundraising, as well as the flexibility to fulfill other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role.

The job will commence at the beginning of January 2009, with three years funding guaranteed. The deadline for applications is 19th November, 2008. The salary is £23,000 plus 6% pension, as well as 24 days annual leave.

Further details and an application pack are available on the GDWG website:

<http://www.gdwg.org.uk/jobs.htm>

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<http://www.guardianmarketing.co.uk/vouchers.html>