

Insaf

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LCRM 15th Anniversary Event.

Four of our members spoke about their struggle with their asylum cases and the support that LCRM gave them with their cases from attending their solicitors with them to writing to MP's and more. One member said that LCRM was ready to launch a campaign on her case which had reached an impasse and this prompted her solicitor to act. She has now completed a law degree and is looking for a job.

One of our members spoke of having attended the anti-racist demo in London and about our protest outside Sainsburys to raise awareness of the azure card and call for it to be scrapped and replaced with cash.

All our members had been politically active from protests outside Yarlswood to protests against cuts and for jobs in Leicester.

One member spoke of having been made destitute when his case failed, making a fresh application and still waiting for NASS support.

All our members had spoken at meetings to raise awareness at places like Leicester University. Priya spoke of LCRM's support for the victims of racism and the importance of them speaking. Priya then informed the meeting of the fees and health costs that refugees now have to pay to renew their right to stay and of the changes to housing regulations that will exclude refugees.

Members of UNITE trade union, Wayne Naylor TUSC member, supporters of Positive Money and from City of Sanctuary listened. A graphic

exhibition of refugees in Iraq and asylum seekers outside the Home Office was on the walls thanks to one of our members. We heard music

from a drummer supporter and celebrated with a cake.

British Citizenship gives people the right to vote in parliamentary and local elections, security at the borders and a sense of belonging to the country. But the government is making it more and more difficult to achieve. The cost is £1005 inc. Ceremony +£12 99 book. You now have to be of "good" character for example you have not got a serious or recent criminal record and you have not deceived the Home Office or been involved in immigration offences in the last 10 years.

But what does the Home Office mean by deceived?

One man has reported being denied citizenship for failing to report at an Immigration Centre. When signing on at Loughborough Immigration Centre, which asylum seekers have to do regularly, our members inform me that little allowance is made for other appointments that they need to attend. In addition most removals from the country are made when people attend to report so people are sometimes too frightened to attend if their case is not ready to hand in. Once again the government is instilling fear in people who have fled from frightening situations.

Immigration offences include entering the country illegally and overstaying both of which force people to do because of the way the asylum system works in this country. It is also an offence to try to re-enter the country after being deported. You

now also have to have passed entry level 3 English in ESOL or an English degree. This can involve years of study. Asylum seekers now have to pay for ESOL classes one of our members went without food to pay £40 for a one term part-time class. Concessions are also being cut for people on low incomes.

To obtain Citizenship a person has to have lived in this country for at least 6 years and for most people it is longer. Many refugees will have done years of voluntary work by that time and our members raising awareness of racism and will be paying taxes. What is the cost of searching 10 years of records? Even with Citizenship people are no longer secure with the national interest clause of the Nationality Act. But surely people should be given the chance to be made welcome here. By an LCRM member.

Leicester Civil Rights Movement consists of a spectrum of individuals who are concerned with the consequences of racial injustice in Britain. We welcome new members at our meetings which are held at The Racial Equality Centre 3rd floor 5-9 Upper Brown Street, Phoenix Yard, Leicester. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 23rd September 2015. Ring Priya 0116 2532053 or Chris 0116 2219459

The government has been using the UKIP vote and scaremongering about the refugees in Calais to further attack refugees and asylum seekers in this country.

The issue in Calais was precipitated by a strike by lorry drivers the reason for which was lost in the propaganda. The number of alleged refugees grew from 6000, which even the managers of Eurotunnel disputed, to 40,000 promoted by the Leicester Mercury to 6 million by David Cameron.

The reality is that very few non-Europeans can get in to this country. Britain takes less than other European countries and far less than countries than that neighbour the conflict.

Those at Calais could easily have been contained if the powers that be had chosen to do so they manage to contain large demonstrations. Instead powerful language has been used to scare people and refugees in Calais like those here treated worse than criminals with at least 13 deaths.

In addition to the fees and health costs that refugees receiving renewing their applications to stay are now paying asylum seeker children have had their benefits cut by £20 a week with no prior notice.

The ministry also announced on the radio that there are plans to cut support for asylum seekers 28 days after their application has ended thus leaving families and individuals totally destitute and homeless since they are not allowed to work.

Since virtually all asylum seekers fail at their first appeal and often have to submit two or three fresh claims afterwards before they win the right to remain for two or three years this will be leaving a lot of people with little or no resources probably more than charities can cope with. Our experience, having just celebrated our 15th Anniversary with numerous asylum seekers being members if for a short time, is that asylum seekers flee here often under the most difficult circumstances to save their lives or protect themselves or their children from prosecution. They leave behind families, friends and often children.

Some do come here because English is their only second language. It can be frightening and difficult not speaking a language in addition to their other problems and others have family members they are trying to rejoin. Most hope to return when their source of conflict is resolved.

The government has also brought forward its plan for landlords to be forced to check their tenants' status. They have done so before the research into piloted areas has been completed. The enforcement is likely to lead landlords to refuse anyone of colour or who has an unusual accent.

The asylum system is unjust. Interpreters are not always provided or speak the wrong language or dialect or are from the opposing tribe to the asylum seeker. The Home Office make it as difficult as possible for people often flatly not believing them, having incorrect knowledge of the country and its oppressors, and refuting their photos and photocopied documents. Getting evidence from war-torn countries can be extremely difficult and often the last thing someone would be able to bring with them.

Homosexuals and lesbians are told to prove their sexuality and despite going to great lengths to do so are often refused.

Refugees and asylum seekers do not cause the economic and social problems that people are made to fear. Cuts to the most vulnerable often pave the way for cuts to the next group. Asylum seekers want to work and contribute to society. The cost of policing asylum seekers outweighs that of their welfare and is going to be increased.

By an LCRM member

Living with cuts to benefit and reason I can't go back or came here.

Living with benefit cuts is a tough situation. Sometimes you feel like you are not treated like a human being. The cuts were done at short notice hence it's difficult to adjust budgets which is just next to nothing.

Ever since the cuts effected it has been extremely difficult to live by as we are struggling to make ends meet. I can't afford to buy nappies and enough food to feed my family. More so charity organisations are struggling and some are closing down which used to help us a lot.

Sometimes the children are affected as they cannot get what their peers are getting. They put us under a lot of stress as parents as we hardly make ends meet.

Are also expected to find our own solicitors and how on earth are we expected to pay for them? They are hardly free solicitors.

At times we are asked to go to Liverpool when the authorities know we can't raise the fares. Even to travel to hospital is very difficult sometimes.

As I cannot go back to my country for political reasons I have established a family life in the UK.

By an LCRM member.

LCRM is an entirely self-funding organisation. Membership is waged £3, unwaged £1, asylum seekers 20p and groups £25. We urge all supporters to join.

Tel Priya 0116 2531053 or Chris 2219459

Please send diary dates, notices and articles to

chrisgoodwin29@yahoo.com

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