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Migration Opportunity Map Project (MOMP)



(28 page .pdf)

Migrants Rights News ~ No: 11

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Welcome to the October 2008 edition of Migrants Rights News

The Migrants Rights Network is working for a rights-based approach to migration, with migrants as full partners in developing the policies and procedures which affect life in the UK. Migrants Rights News aims to inform our members and other groups working on migration issues about regional and national policy developments, campaign news, recent research and upcoming events.

At the Heart of Migrants Rights News are the campaigns and strategies being developed by migrants to consolidate their position in British society. We focus on activities that extend the scope of the human, economic and social rights which apply to migrants' circumstances.

We would be happy to circulate information and bulletins sent by members in the following month's newsletter, subject to editorial/space limitations! Please send any contributions to: info@migrantsrights.org.uk.

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In this month's newsletter, find details of:

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(1) Migrants Rights Network at Party Conferences 2008

The case for a progressive approach to immigration policy was pushed at all the major domestic conferences during the autumn, with the MRN being involved at fringe meetings at the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Liberal Democrats and Labour Party conferences.

Several organisations held fringe events at the TUC annual congress (8-11 September) in Brighton. Oxfam UK and Unite brought together a platform to discuss the organisation and empowerment of migrant workers on the Monday evening, which featured contributions from Jack Dromey of Unite, Kate Wareing, the director of Oxfam UK's anti-poverty programme, Paul Whitehouse of the Gangmaster Licensing

Authority, and Jan Mokrzycki, of the Federation of Poles. All the speakers agreed on the importance of the trade union movement in supporting the rights of migrants. This was illustrated in contributions from the audience, discussing experiences in organising migrant workers in sectors like construction and residential care.

The MRN's fringe meeting the following evening had a more specific focus - the huge increase in passport and identity checks directed against migrant workers since February this year. The discussion was jointly sponsored by Unite, the GMB, and Unison. A GMB shop steward provided a vivid description of what is entailed by the new immigration employment regime when he described the raid on his workplace, Katsouris Foods, North London, which had taken place earlier in the summer. The largely immigrant workforce were detained for 11 hours, prevented from talking to each other or using mobiles, with some fingerprinted, with the eventual outcome of 22 people being identified as being 'suspect'. He said that many migrants lived in fear of such operations and expected the trade union movement to do something about them.

Jack Dromey of Unite, and Liane Venner of Unison, set out their views on the importance of the trade union movement adopting a clear, principled position in support of the rights of migrants. They agreed that current policies were having the effect of demonising migrants and undermining their capacity to resist exploitation. Ruth Grove-White, MRN Policy Officer, reported the findings of research which would be published in November on the effect of the new immigration checks. The 'Papers Please' report showed that the biggest impact of the new procedures was on the most vulnerable of migrants. Workers were being dismissed from their jobs when the slightest doubt arose over their

immigration status. These included people whose applications for legal status had been caught up in backlogs lasting for years at the Home Office, and many others were victims of errors and confusion about their position. She explained that the central finding of the report was that injustices that were common in the workplace were being reinforced by the draconian character of the new regulations.

A week later, and the argument for progressive immigration policies was taken up at a fringe meeting at the Liberal Democrat's federal conference in Bournemouth (13th-17th September). Organised jointly by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, MRN, and the Lib Dem think-tank Centre Forum, the well-attended meeting heard the views of Sukhvinder Stubbs, of the Barrow Cadbury Trust, Don Flynn, MRN, and Chris Huhne, the Lib Dem spokesperson on home affairs.

Huhne argued that the Lib Dems had distinguished themselves by being the only party in Parliament which had opposed the curtailment of immigrant rights, and which consistently argued in favour of recognition of the benefits they bring to the UK. The important issue now was to win support for this position amongst wider sections of the population. Sukhvinder Stubbs argued that this could be done, and described the findings of a recent Barrow Cadbury Trust mission to Toronto to look at the way the issue was tackled in this major Canadian city. Flynn agreed that we should not be pessimistic about our chances of winning support for positions supporting the rights of migrants. He argued that there are significant levels of support for more internationalist approaches, particular in the large cities of the UK, and that a more determined attempt to articulate this as a coherent political standpoint would strengthen the progressive component of public opinion.

The Barrow Cadbury Trust also organised

a fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference, which took place in Manchester this year (21st-25th September). This was jointly sponsored by MRN and Compass, the democratic left think tank. Home Office minister Meg Hillier spoke on the platform, arguing that the Labour government did have a progressive approach to migration, and favoured facilitating it when this was in the interests of the British economy. But she said that it had to be properly controlled, with the authorities having the capacity to act against any migrants who broke the rules.

Don Flynn spoke for MRN, taking issue with the claim that simply admitting people to meet the needs of the British economy was in itself evidence of a progressive approach. Outcomes for migrants also had to be scrutinised, and when the evidence suggested that these were often not much more than sheer exploitation and wholesale disempowerment, something was very seriously wrong. Sukhvinder Stubbs argued for an approach to immigration policy which placed it in the context of other social measures aimed at alleviating entrenched poverty and poor public services. London MP, Karen Buck, spelt out what immigration looks like from the standpoint of a Member of Parliament working in a diverse working class community, and affirmed her view that the government had a responsibility to promote the rights of migrants and to present their case positively to the wider public.

The Barrow Cadbury Trust linked up with the Social Market Foundation to organise a fringe event at the Conservative Party conference, which took place in Birmingham at the beginning of October. Tory immigration spokesperson Damien Green said that the Conservatives fully agreed that immigration was a fundamental feature of a modern society like the UK, and they had no intention of

advocating zero admission policies. Whilst they favoured a cap on the total numbers which might be admitted in any one year, they opposed the 'tough' rhetoric of the government, which presented migrants in a bad light and discouraged the positive view they would like to foster.

(2) Phil Woolas inherits Points Based System - described by lawyers as like a "car crash"

The main channel for future economic migration to the UK - Tier 2 of the Points-Based immigration System (PBS) - has continued to become unstuck throughout September. Many charities, businesses and lawyers are now hoping that new Immigration Minister Phil Woolas will take the opportunity to dramatically rethink Home Office plans for Tier 2.

The Government is reported to be dramatically behind schedule in the development of the systems and policies governing Tier 2, not to mention far short of securing enough approved employers to make this Tier work. Under Tier 2 all businesses must register with UKBA as official 'sponsors' before bringing in skilled migrants with a job offer. By the end of September just 309 out of the necessary 20,000 businesses had become [registered sponsors](#), having successfully undergone an application and audit of past migrant employees. MRN has received reports from law firms during the past week that UKBA's audit process for sponsors is becoming increasingly slapdash, presumably to boost numbers of registered employers. Even so, many small and medium employers appear to be holding back from registering.

Many employers are worried that the positions they are hoping to fill under Tier 2 will not be eligible. At the beginning of September the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) released a list of

'[shortage occupations](#)' for Tier 2, in the UK and Scotland only . The Home Office is expected to approve this list in October, reducing the number of jobs available for skilled non-EEA migrants with a job offer from 1 million to 700,000 per year. Although ballet dancers and sheep shearers are included on the list, some glaring omissions have caused concern from non-EEA countries: certain skilled professions including GPs, IT specialists, social workers and teachers in all subjects except for maths and science have been excluded from the list. The list has been received with dismay by countries providing skilled workers to the UK, in particular from Commonwealth countries such as India, which will face [severely reduced possibilities for economic migration to Britain](#) .

The fears of ethnic catering businesses and care homes about the impact of Tier 2 on their ability to recruit sufficient staff have been reported in earlier editions of Migrants' Rights News. It appears that the MAC has to some extent responded to heavy lobbying from the Chinese and Bangladeshi 'ethnic catering' industries over the right to bring non-EEA workers into the UK, as 'skilled chefs' have made it onto the shortage occupation list. There is, though, a sting in the tail as catering businesses will have to prove that the job is 'skilled', and pay will be at a minimum of £8.10 per hour. Similarly, the inclusion of 'skilled senior care workers' onto the list will provide some solace for UK care homes, but will not cover 'unskilled' workers on a pay rate under £8.80 per hour.

Home Office cooperation with the legal sector over Tier 2 is also under threat; sponsor registration is complex and law firms across the country are providing crucial support to interested businesses to register and have an initial 'audit'. Steam is rising in the legal sector as [UKBA has erratically approved certain law firms to give guidance to potential](#)

[sponsors](#), and printed their names on the UKBA website .

Tier 5, also due to be introduced in November alongside Tier 2, is in a similar state of chaos, referred to by some lawyers as like a "car crash". Tier 5 - for temporary workers and youth education/work schemes to the UK - also requires employers or educational establishments to register as 'sponsors'. However, UKBA's website still gives only minimal guidance on applicants and sponsors applying under this Tier, reporting that the Home Office is '[continuing to develop the \[Tier 5\] policy over the next few months](#)' .

Understandably, a number of major potential sponsors from the cultural and sporting sectors are now utterly bewildered as to how to proceed.

It is clear that the Home Office has not yet to demonstrate that Tiers 2 and 5 are feasible initiatives. We hope that, as new Labour Immigration Minister Phil Woolas takes the helm from Liam Byrne during October, he will take the opportunity to make some serious changes to the Points-Based System before it is too late.

(3) MRN urges community responses to the 'Simplification Bill'

[The draft \(partial\) Immigration and Citizenship Bill](#) (or 'Simplification Bill' as it's commonly referred to) is currently undergoing review by the Home Affairs Select Committee . [The Bill, reviewed in Migrants' Rights News in August 2008](#) , is now the subject of a consultation by the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR). The JCHR, comprising twelve individuals from the House of Lords and the House of Commons, scrutinises key pieces of draft legislation and assesses their compatibility with the UK's human rights obligations.

MRN has produced a briefing paper on

the Immigration and Citizenship Bill, and has highlighted four key concerns which we urge concerned groups/individuals to consider: We have highlighted our four key areas of concern in the draft Bill as extended UKBA powers of examination; extended powers of detention; a tougher and longer journey for migrants to become British citizens; and penalising and monitoring migrants in the UK.

We know, from our discussions with network members, lawyers and campaign groups, that many aspects of the draft Bill are causing serious concern. Groups and individuals can comment on the draft Bill, by sending a statement (up to 2500 words) to the JCHR before 31st October 2008. This is a real opportunity to show that the draft Bill cannot go ahead without being challenged by people who know what a big impact it could have on both individuals and local communities. It is also a good time to invite some support from local groups, businesses and MPs who may have some influence over the Bill later on.

We are asking concerned groups and individuals to:

- Write a letter to your local MP stating your objections about the draft Bill.
- Even better, get a group together to visit your MP and ask what they think about the draft Bill.
- Make a formal submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights with your comments
- Write to us with your thoughts or experiences and we will try to include them in our formal submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

If you would like to do any of the above, or if you need more information about the draft Bill, then contact Ruth Grove-White, the Migrants' Rights Network (MRN) Policy Officer,

by e-mail: r.grove-white@migrantsrights.org.uk, or
telephone - 020 7288 1267.

4) Home Office fields severe criticisms about treatment of immigration detainees

The UK risks sacrificing the human rights of many asylum-seekers through its excessive use of detention, according to the Council of Europe (CoE) Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg in last month's alarming [assessment report on the British immigration system](#). It was followed by newspaper reports that the Home Office has launched an [independent inquiry into claims of physical abuse against immigration detainees](#) in the UK.

The CoE report drew attention to UKBA's extensive use of detention in order to meet its "*publicised tough targets*". The detention of asylum seekers on the 'Fast Track Process' was of particular concern and should, in line with international obligations, as this should only take place "*exceptionally, for the shortest possible time*". The Commissioner noted the "*discrepancies between official instructions and practice*" around the controversial detention of children and '*vulnerable adults*' including pregnant women and torture victims. He stressed that UKBA's planned increase in the detention estate, 70% of which is currently managed by private contractors, was at odds with the CoE's view that the UK should aim to reduce, rather than increase, its levels of detention. It was of further concern to the Commissioner that the UK still has no limit on the length of detention and he recommended that the UK introduce a maximum time limit for administrative detention.

The concerns highlighted in the report were bolstered by the launch in

September of an independent inquiry by the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith into the alleged widespread abuse of detainees in the UK. Nuala O'Loan, who led the inquiry into the Omagh bombings, is expected to conduct a robust examination of many of the claims outlined in '[Outsourcing Abuse](#)'. This shocking report by Medical Justice, the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns and Birnberg Peirce & Partners caused a furore when it was released in July, publicising allegations of serious abuse against migrants during their detention and/or removal from the UK .

The Commissioner's emphatic disapproval of the detention of children in the UK has echoed the assertions of the New Statesman's ongoing '[No Place for Children](#)' campaign . However, the UK has recently made a significant step forward towards improving its standards for the most vulnerable of migrants - children. Although the UK Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, it had continued to retain a reservation in relation to immigration and citizenship issues. Following a six-month Government review into this issue, in September 2008 the UK withdrew the reservation. MRN will continue to monitor reports about UKBA, in the hope that practice will follow principle.

(5) UK endorses European Union Immigration Pact

Liam Byrne, the UK's former Immigration Minister, recently endorsed the extensive immigration controls proposed in the [draft European Union Pact on Immigration and Asylum](#) .

Since taking over the rotating Presidency of the European Union (EU), the French Government has pursued a common EU-wide Immigration Pact in order to harmonise immigration policy and crack

down on illegal migration. During late September, EU Interior Ministers, including Liam Byrne, met in Brussels to discuss and approve the Pact, including the introduction of an EU 'Blue Card' for highly-skilled migrants, based on the American 'Green Card', to control the entry and movement of migrants from outside the EEA. The role of Frontex - the agency which currently manages the external borders of the EU - would also be expanded.

Liam Byrne's approval of the Pact, due to be officially signed by the EU leaders in October this year, signals the UK's commitment to a common immigration policy and the introduction of a 'blue card scheme' for non-EU nationals in the EEA. If introduced, the UK would still continue to retain an opt-out as with other immigration provisions at EU level.

Unsurprisingly the Pact, which will inevitably curb migration to EU countries for non-EEA nationals, has been particularly [criticised by ex-colonies such as Brazil](#) , on the basis that such measures would violate migrants' rights and risk continued goodwill between countries.

(6) British 'Immigration Cap' hotly debated

The controversial proposal of an 'immigration cap' - introducing an annual limit to the numbers of immigrants coming to the UK - has continued to be hotly debated during September.

A new report '[Balanced Migration: A new approach to controlling immigration](#)', released in September by Frank Fields MP and Nicholas Soames MP and written by Migrationwatch, presents a case for a limit to permanent immigration to the UK. The report broadly argues for a concrete reduction in migrants able to settlement in the UK, over and above the "meal ticket for life" which its authors believe is offered

by the Government's new Points-Based System for immigration. The report proposes instead that non-EU labour migrants allowed to settle in the UK be limited to around 20,000 per year. All other immigrants would only be able to work in the UK for a maximum four-year period before returning to their countries of origin.

The idea of an 'immigration cap' has been consistently rejected by the Labour Government and a range of non-governmental organisations, including the MRN, although we were disappointed to hear new Immigration Minister, Phil Woolas, appointed in early October to replace Liam Byrne, indicate to the Sunday Telegraph his support for the idea of an immigration cap . We see this proposal as a problematic quick-fix, oversimplifying the complex contributions made by migrants in the UK by setting an inevitably arbitrary limit on numbers who can settle here. Acute insecurity would be introduced for the majority of migrants by forcing them to leave after four years of paying taxes, working and establishing families in the UK. MRN believes there should always be the option for migrants who live and work in UK for four years to settle here, for the long-term benefit of both migrants and local communities.

The proposal to limit long-term migrants would also make worse Britain's growing over-reliance on temporary labour migration - already underway in the Government's Points-Based System. Research released by the OECD during September criticises the growing tendency of many countries, including the UK, to try to satisfy the majority of labour needs through temporary migration. It points out that many high and low-skilled labour needs are permanent, making it a waste of time and money to fill these gaps through a regular turnover of temporary migrants.

(7) Reports and Research

- '*Your Place or Mine? The Local Economics of Migration*', Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), September 2008
The IPPR's 'Economic Migration Programme' has produced its first report addressing the economic impacts of migration in the UK. The report examines local level effects of migration, identifying key skill and diversity benefits coming into areas receiving migrants. The benefits of migration are, according to the report, more pronounced in urban areas, and it identifies ways in which local areas can increase their gains from migration.
- *International Migration Outlook 2008*, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), September 2008
The OECD annual report overviews migration to OECD countries, looking at trends, policies, and labour migration in particular. The 2008 edition exposes the increasing trend across OECD countries towards attracting temporary migrant labour. See article (6) of Migrants Rights News for further discussion of the findings.
- '*Balanced Migration: A new approach to controlling immigration*', Migrationwatch, September 2008
The Balanced Migration report makes an argument for the limitation of permanent settlement in the UK according to an annual 'cap' of approximately 20,000. Beyond this, the report proposes that economic migrants to the UK return to their country of origin after four years. See article (6) of Migrants Rights News for further discussion of the findings.

(8) Upcoming Events

- **LMRG Seminar, 14th October 2008, 5pm, SOAS, Room 102, Building 21-22 Russell Square**
(not in the main SOAS building)

Alexander Betts (University of Oxford) Cross-Issue Persuasion: Why Northern States Contribute to Refugee Protection in the South.
Discussant: Eiko Thielemann (LSE)

- **' *Dealing with Multiple Inequalities: Refugees in London* Conference, Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP). 15th October 2008, Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith, London**
For more info email olesya@reap.org.uk.

This conference aims to raise the key issue of multiple inequalities faced by refugees and create a platform for effective debate about this issue. REAP wants to gain a clearer picture of how voluntary and statutory professionals in West London are responding to multiple inequalities issues facing refugees, and whether they realise they must respond equally to all people regardless of refugee status, and with only limited exceptions relating to asylum-seeking status. In addition, significant stigma and discrimination amongst refugees - particularly around race, sexuality, disability and mental health - are rarely acknowledged openly either by refugee groups or those who work with refugee communities. This conference will aim to address this issue and find ways to tackle it.

- **MRC International Conference "Train Ability"**, October 24th at the Westminster City Council Hall, 64

Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP
from 2.30pm to 5.30pm (lunch will
be served at 1.30pm)
For more info please contact Laura
Marziale at Laura@migrants.org.uk

The conference will celebrate the
third phase of the Transnational
Project "Train-Ability" funded by the
Leonardo da Vinci Agency.

The project aims to identify, within
the countries involved in the project
(Germany, Greece, Turkey, UK and
Switzerland), initiatives to tackle
social exclusion experienced by
disadvantaged people in accessing
training and therefore employment
opportunities. The project aims to
ideate, realize and test an
integrated system of methods,
techniques and tools (called Train-
ability) able to improve the access,
suitability and effectiveness of
training courses aimed at favouring
the inclusion in the labour market of
the most disadvantaged people.

The conference will focus on access
to education for disadvantaged
groups, the selection processes for
learning opportunities and the
support interventions to overcome
barriers to learning and employment
for the above target group. There
will be key speakers from Italy and
the UK.

- **Justice and Peace Annual Day,
Migration: The Changing Face of
London: Welcoming Christ in our
Community**, Saturday 25th October
2008 10am-4pm, St John Fisher's
Church Hall, Imperial Close, North
Harrow, HA2 7LW
For more info email
justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk or
phone **020 8888 5518**

Key speakers Jon Cruddas, MP for
Barking and Dagenham and Neil

Jameson, Director of London Citizens. Drama from groundbreaking group Ice and Fire. Workshops will include London Citizens Campaign, Strangers into Citizens, Sex Trafficking, Refugee support and campaigning, English language teaching, Migrants and Health care.

- **The end of section 4 support? Public Meetings Asylum Support Appeals Project**
Monday 10th November 2008
10am-12noon, (Followed by a light lunch), Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, Bethnal Green E2 6HG
and
Tuesday 11th November 2008 2:30-4:30pm, (Followed by refreshments), Guest speaker - Sheona York, Hammersmith and Fulham Community Law Centre, Palingswick House, 241 King St, Hammersmith W6 9LP
Please contact Gerry or Abi on **020 8686 1888** or at Abi@asaproject.org.uk for further information.

The Government published its draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill in July 2008. This Bill is going to replace all the previous Immigration Acts to make the immigration system 'simpler' and will introduce many changes to the current asylum system. One of these changes will be about the way asylum seekers can get housing and welfare support, known as asylum support (NASS support). Will asylum seekers be able to access support more easily? Or will they continue to remain destitute for weeks, months and years?

Two Asylum Support Appeals Project Public Meetings will explore whether the new Immigration and Citizenship Bill will improve housing

and welfare support for asylum seekers. These public meetings will give you an opportunity for your organisation to find out what the new asylum support system might look like based on the Home Office consultation paper; think about what this might mean for asylum seekers and your organisation; share your views about the proposed changes and find out ASAP's views. ASAP will be responding to the Home Office consultation at the end of November. We hope to include some of the views expressed at the meetings in our written response, including your organisation's details, with your permission. The meetings are aimed at Refugee Community Organisations, BMER advice agencies and other small organisations working with asylum seekers. Please note that the meetings will only cover housing and welfare support issues, not the immigration side of the asylum system.

London City of Sanctuary launch event, 7pm, 12th November, St Martin's Hall, St-Martin-in-the-Fields, London WC2
For more info email london@cityofsanctuary.org

City of Sanctuary is a movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Our goal is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the country which are proud to be places of safety, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities. Many people are now familiar with the idea of a 'Fairtrade City', in which a wide range of community groups and organisations make a commitment to using and selling fairtrade goods. In a similar way a 'City of Sanctuary' is a place where

a broad range of local businesses, organisations, community groups and faith communities, as well as local government, are publicly committed to welcoming and including people seeking sanctuary. The City of Sanctuary movement began in Sheffield and there are now active groups all around the country. Now the movement is coming to London. The event will involve performance, music and speakers. This event is for anyone interested in developing the City of Sanctuary movement in London, or just keen to find out more.

- **Managing economic migration and its impacts, Institute for Employment Studies Annual Public Employment Policy Conference 2008**, 19 November 2008, 10.00am - 4.00pm, London Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London, W1K 6JP

Increases in migration and new patterns of mobility have had profound consequences for the UK at the national, regional and local levels. In response to these, the UK government has increasingly sought to manage migration in order to maximise economic benefit to the UK, while minimising associated challenges. The IES Annual Public Employment Policy Conference will provide an opportunity to hear expert evidence on the impacts of migration, both on the labour market and more widely; engage with speakers and fellow delegates to discuss this evidence; and reflect on the latest policy developments regarding a managed migration system. The keynote address will be from Professor David Metcalf CBE, Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee.

- **'Migrant Workers in the**

Economy: Rights and Responsibilities', Open debate,
Thursday 20th November 2008,
4.30-6.00 p.m. Friends House
(Small Meeting House), 173 Euston
Road, London NW1 2BJ
miles.litvinoff@eccr.org.uk

Migrant workers now make up a significant proportion of the UK workforce. But they are one of the most vulnerable groups of workers, and their employment rights are commonly abused. As a society we have a responsibility to ensure that migrant workers are treated fairly. State agencies, companies, investors, trade unions, churches, community organisations and individual citizens and all have a part to play. Issues include: how much does the UK economy depend on migrant labour and in which sectors? What can we learn from good and bad practices in delivering migrant workers' rights? What are the supply chain issues? What responsibilities lie with which actors in society and the economy? What are the views of migrant workers themselves? To explore these issues, the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility is bringing together speakers from government, business, the trade unions, a migrant worker project, and the Church, with an audience of faith-based and responsible investors, corporate responsibility practitioners, justice and peace groups, and other members of civil society.

- **Training: Issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers when claiming asylum in the UK, UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group**, Friday 28th November 2008, 1.30 - 4.30pm. UKLGIG, 32-36 Loman Street, London UK

The course is aimed at people, in the voluntary sector or in the private sector, who work with and support lesbian and gay asylum seekers. It aims to raise awareness of the issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers, and to equip participants with an understanding of how to best support lesbian and gay asylum seekers while they go through the asylum process. Topics to be covered include: What is sexuality? What are the issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers in their home countries? Overview of the asylum process; Why are lesbian and gay asylum seekers refused asylum in the UK? What are the specific issues faced by lesbian and gay asylum seekers when they claim asylum in the UK? The role of voluntary and community groups in supporting lesbian and gay asylum seekers; A lesbian or gay asylum seeker may give their account on the day. Fee: Community and voluntary sector £49.00 per person. Private sector £99.00 per person; Maximum 12 participants per course.

- **Charity Event: An evening of film, dance, singing and poetry to raise awareness about people who have had to seek asylum in Britain**, Friday 28th November 2008, 7pm, St John's United Reformed Church, Cowper Street, Ipswich
Melissa Day: **01473 434683**

The evening will be specifically looking at what happens to refugees' identities when making the transition from their home country into British culture and society. The evening will be a mix of different art forms of communication including items by Mr Gee - a gifted poet who has recently been performing in "*Into the Hoods*" at

the Novello Theatre, London; Godiva Apedo - a talented dancer from the original cast of the Lion King; Ele Scott - who loves contemporary dance and is lead singer with the Suffolk band 'The Pursuit'; Nawroz Oramari - a Kurdish singer who incorporates many different languages into his lyrical work; Mqhubeli Timbha - a refugee from Zimbabwe; Jackie Rigden - an active volunteer visitor to centres in London who will be speaking about the process of seeking asylum and trying to unravel the meaning of terms used by the media. Tickets: £5.00 incl. light refreshments

(9) Other Announcements

- **Terence Higgins Trust Programme Launch**, September 2008

Terence Higgins Trust has launched a programme of work targeting men who have sex with men who have migrated to England and Wales to help reduce their vulnerability to HIV and poor sexual health. THT has developed a number of materials for use by workers and organisations who work with migrants that are now available free of charge, including small leaflets in English, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Spanish. These contain information for men about the legal situation around homosexuality in the UK, HIV, sexually transmitted infections, general healthcare, immigration issues, benefits and getting help and advice; Guidelines to assist workers and organisations provide help and information to men who have sex with men; a tool for organisations to use to assess how 'gay friendly' their services are.

- **Housing Rights Website for new Migrants launched**

<http://www.housing-rights.info>
<http://www.hact.org.uk/article.asp?PageId=42&ArticleId=34>

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact) have launched the first housing rights website to be specifically aimed at answering housing rights queries for new migrants. Visitors to the site are able enter as either frontline housing advisers or new arrivals to receive advice and guidance about their housing rights, including the law on eligibility for social housing and related welfare benefits. The site includes sections on the specific housing rights of new migrants who are refugees; EEA workers and other EEA nationals and family members

A8 nationals; Bulgarians and Romanians; work permit holders; people fleeing domestic violence; people with social care needs. For more information about site, got to: or to:

<http://www.cih.org/news/view.php?id=949>

- **African Political Engagement Survey**

This is a survey currently being carried out by an African-led organisation striving to increase and improve the levels of political engagement among members of the African community in the United Kingdom. The survey is aimed at members of the African community in the United Kingdom, regardless of their nationality, gender, religion, race, or immigration status. To obtain a copy of the survey, please kindly e-mail Sylvie at sbradwell@cdd.org.uk

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