Making sense? The support of dispersed asylum seekers

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Aims

This paper looks at how asylum support workers make sense of their roles and how ‘asylum support’ is delivered within the confines of national policy.

Methodology

A total of 32 people, working in asylum support teams within the Yorkshire and Humber region, took part in the study. The participants were mostly white British, although there were two people from Asian communities and a further two from Eastern Europe. The data was gathered using semi structured interviews and focus groups which focussed on three key areas: the type, nature and delivery of asylum support services; the role support teams and individuals take in this support; and future development of support services.

Key issues

The report looks at the differences between the ‘official’ role of the asylum support teams and what is actually delivered. It highlights the unique and hybrid nature of asylum support work, with many respondents reporting that they provide a much wider support role [sometimes taking on a ‘social care’ or ‘housing officer’ role – and there are also examples of respondents taking on the role of birthing partner and marriage guidance counsellor]. Those that did not provide wider support wanted to, but were unable due to time and resource pressures. The report also found that many respondents felt that asylum support was like a ‘quest’, but once that quest was completed, the sense of satisfaction and achievement was great.

Conclusions

The report concludes that asylum support workers attempt to provide ‘added value’ to asylum support requirements to combat exclusion and help asylum seekers to integrate into their communities and their new lives – and that they gain some personal fulfilment in return for their efforts.

Web Link
Making sense? The support of dispersed asylum seekers - link to external website
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