Forced inactivity and barriers to participation among refused asylum seekers

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Aims

This briefing paper [Number 12] forms part of a series produced by Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers [PAFRAS]. This paper focuses on the ‘deskilling’ of refused asylum seekers.

Methodology

The content of the paper is derived from interviews or conversations with people who use the PAFRAS drop-in centre based in Leeds, United Kingdom, as well as a questionnaire given to 32 refused asylum seekers asking about their skills and qualifications.

Key issues

The paper reports that the ability of refused asylum seekers to engage in wider society is prevented: work remains unavailable and education opportunities are generally denied. Section 4 support is conditional on participating in community activities, however, involvement in volunteering could result in them being issued with removal directions. Periods of lack of employment can lead to deskilling which in turn can have implications for the mental health and well-being and hinders their longer term prospects when, and if, they are later given leave to remain and enabled to work.

Conclusions

The paper suggests that the range of barriers in place to deny failed asylum seekers to employment, education or volunteering denies this group access to any form of social engagement which is seen as a part of a wider government framework which ultimately forces people to leave the country.

Web Link
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Access to employment
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