

# 1 What is the difference between an asylum seeker, a refugee and a migrant?

**Asylum Seeker:** Asylum is protection given by a country to a person fleeing from persecution in their own country. An asylum seeker is a person who has applied for asylum and is waiting for a decision.

**Refugee:** A person whose asylum application has been successful and who is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution back home.

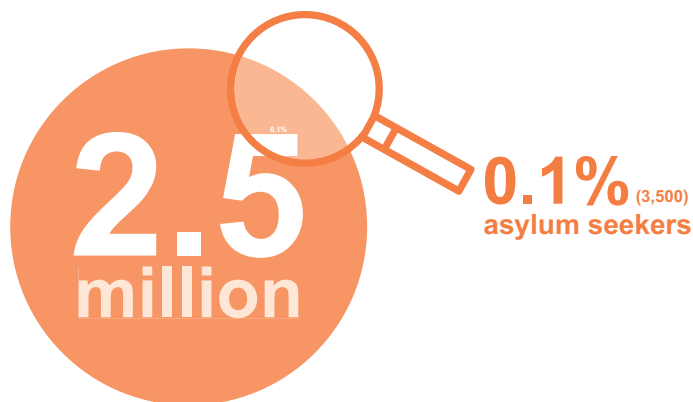
**Migrant:** is anyone who has migrated to another country for whatever reason.

The rules regarding asylum seekers and refugees are set out in the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees. This states that everyone has the right to apply for asylum in another country. There is no such thing as an 'illegal' or 'bogus' asylum seeker.

# 4 What about the North East?

The North East has a population of **2.5million**. There are fewer than **3,500** asylum seekers here which represents less than **0.1%** of the total population of the region (G4S 2017)

## North East Population



# 2 Why do refugees leave home?

Refugees are fleeing unimaginable horrors at home.

Over **320,000** people are now estimated to have died in the conflict in Syria – more than the total number of Allied troops killed in the Battle of the Somme.

Think about how you would feel having to leave your country very quickly to go to a place where you have no family, friends and little knowledge of the language or customs. People are usually very frightened, often leaving everything they know because their lives are in danger.

# 5 How do refugees get to the UK?

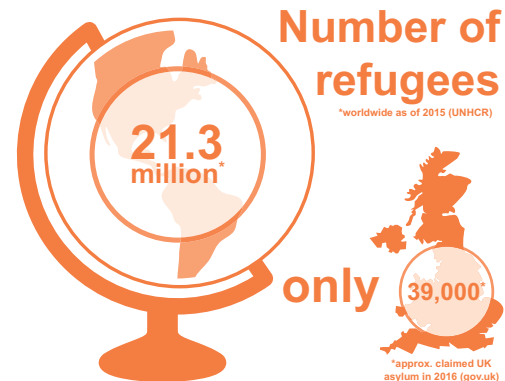
There are very few ways for refugees to get to the UK safely and legally. This means that many people undertake dangerous journeys to reach safety – including crossing the Mediterranean Sea on overcrowded boats. There were **5,098** recorded deaths in the Mediterranean in **2016 alone**.

In 2014, the UK Government set up the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme. As of September 2016, only **4,414** people have actually been resettled under the scheme – less than the capacity of Croft Park, home of Blyth Spartans AFC.

# 3 Does the UK take its fair share of refugees?

The UK has a long history of helping refugees – from French Huguenots in the 17th century to Kindertransport rescue saving 10,000 children from Nazi Germany.

Recently, the numbers of people claiming asylum in the UK have been low.

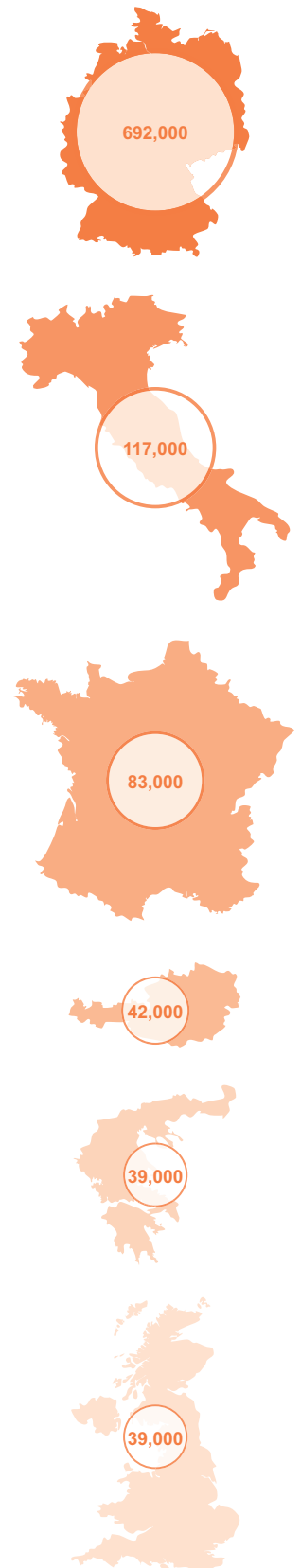


In 2016 approximately 39,000 people claimed asylum (including dependents). This is a tiny fraction of the total number of refugees in the world (21.3 million people as of 2015 (UNHCR))

This represents immense human suffering and we can, and should, be doing more to help. The countries currently supporting the most refugees are: Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia and Jordan.

Lebanon hosts **183** refugees for every **1,000** residents – the highest ratio of any country in the world.

## EU asylum applications



1. Germany
2. Italy
3. France
4. Austria
5. Greece
6. United Kingdom

The UK had the 6th Highest number of asylum applications in the EU & is ranked 17th in terms of asylum applicants per head of resident population (gov.uk 2017)

## 6 Why do refugees and migrants come to the UK?

150 years ago, the British Empire spanned the globe and many people have subsequently migrated to the UK from its former colonies – the source of much of our wealth.

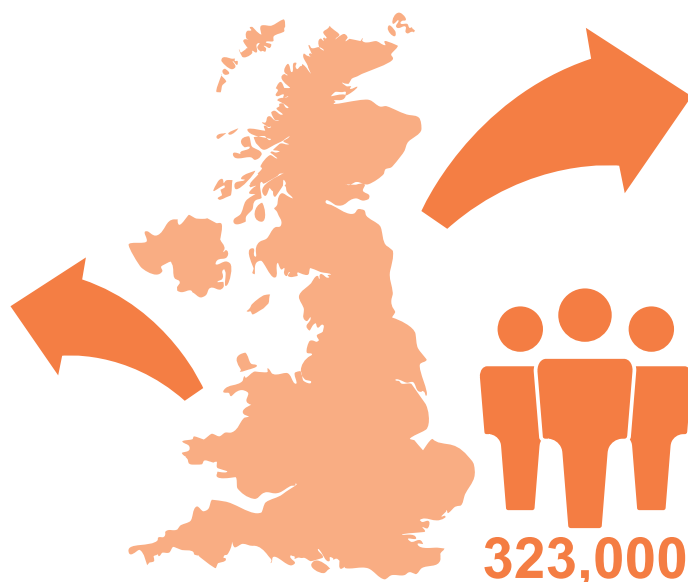
Most asylum seekers do not choose their destination country. When fleeing persecution it isn't the first thing on an individual's mind. Those refugees with some choice often come to the UK because they have friends or family here.

Top 4 countries of origin of people making asylum claims in the UK in 2016

1. Iran
2. Pakistan
3. Iraq
4. Afghanistan

Compared with much of the world, the UK is an open and tolerant country that allows people the freedom to be themselves. We have a lot to be proud of and should welcome people who want to make this island their home.

The movement of migrants is not just one way. In year ending Sept 2016 **323,000** people left the UK (Office for national statistics 2017)



The vast majority of migrant visas are given to international students who are estimated to be worth **£25 billion** to the UK economy (Universities UK 2017)

This Mythbuster was produced by the Newcastle Citywide Asylum Seeker/Refugee Support Group: a group of statutory & voluntary sector organisations who have been working collaboratively in the field of migration since 1999, and by Justice First supporting refugees in the Tees Valley. With thanks to Lempriere Pringle Trust for support.

## 7 What financial support do refugees get when they arrive in the UK?

When someone arrives in the UK to seek asylum they can apply to the UK Government (not local councils) for financial support. This is at a lower rate than mainstream benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance.

## 8 Can asylum seekers and refugees work?

While someone is waiting for a decision on their case they are not allowed to work. Most asylum seekers find this really difficult as they want to work to use the skills that they have and to provide for themselves and their family. Someone granted refugee status can work and must pay taxes like everyone else.

## 9 Where do asylum seekers and refugees live?

If an asylum seeker has nowhere to live while they are waiting for a decision, the UK Government will give them a place to stay.

They will be 'dispersed' to an area within the UK on a no-choice basis.

The accommodation is also given on a 'no choice' basis and is often in places that are hard to let. In most cases the property will be shared with other asylum seekers including sometimes strangers sharing bedrooms.

In the North East the asylum accommodation is provided by the private companies G4S and Jomast.

Once someone has been granted asylum and told that they may remain in the UK, they can move to a new town or city. They are also able to apply for council housing or rent privately.

## 10 Are we less safe with asylum seekers and refugees in our community?

There is no data to suggest that refugees are more likely to commit crime.

In the UK all asylum seekers are:

- fingerprinted
- photographed
- security checked
- issued with ID cards

### All must:

Report at regular intervals to immigration reporting centres

### All can be:

Detained at any point during their asylum application.