

# Sanctuary: Inside Stories

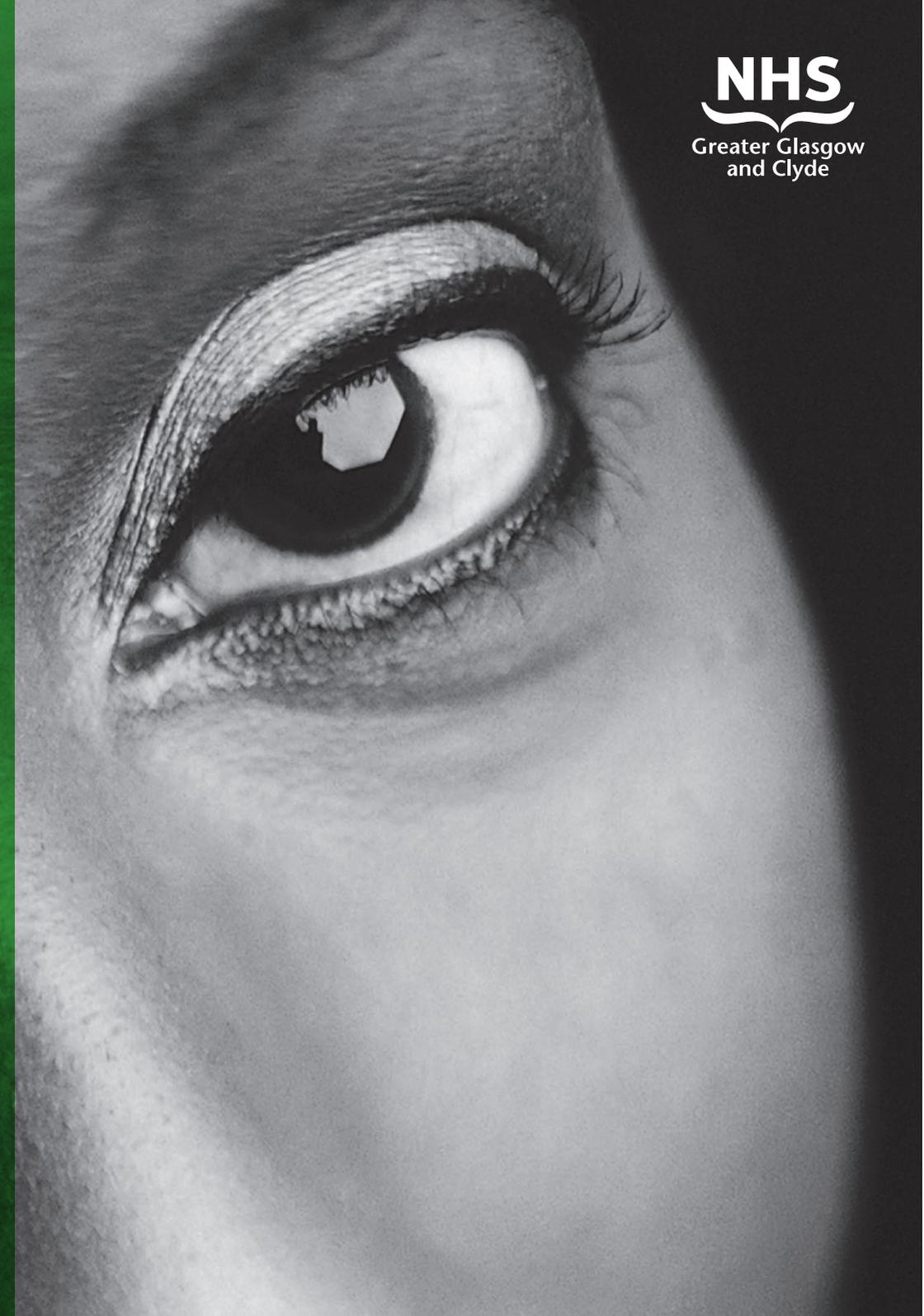
This resource pack is intended to be used in conjunction with the film 'Sanctuary: Inside Stories'. The film is for use in training and education settings. **It is not for public screening.** The film was produced in 2009 by Diversity Films.

## **Partners**

Scottish Refugee Council  
Medical Foundation for the Care  
of Victims of Torture Scotland  
Mental Health Foundation  
NHS Health Scotland  
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde  
Voices Of eXperience

## **Funders**

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde  
NHS Health Scotland



'It busted many of the myths surrounding asylum seekers, but the reasons for seeking asylum were heartbreaking.'

'Use it as much as possible to raise awareness.'

## Before showing the film please read this

This film, 'Sanctuary: Inside Stories', features the lived experiences of five refugees living in Scotland. It focuses particularly on the asylum process and the impact on their mental health. The film also shows two professionals talking about their perspectives on working in this field. In addition there is an interview with a pastor addressing how mental health may be viewed from different religious perspectives.

The contributors have given their permission for the film to be used in the context of training, education and awareness-raising. However, due to the sensitive nature of what they disclose, **the film is not intended for public distribution or screening.** If you want to use this film with a large audience or outside a training context please get in touch with Scottish Refugee Council on 0141 248 9799 ([train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:train@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)) to discuss this.

We recommend that you view the film yourself before screening it to your audience as some of the content may cause distress.

The film was produced with an adult audience in mind but it may also be suitable for use in settings such as higher and further education institutions and schools as an awareness-raising tool. The intended audience is people who work with asylum seekers and refugees in a supporting role.

This would include:

- Healthcare professionals
- General Practitioners
- Nurses
- Health visitors
- Psychiatric nurses
- Social workers
- Housing workers
- Mental health workers
- Psychologists
- Counsellors
- Support and advice workers
- Educators and trainers

'A powerful presentation – always good to have direct and very personal testimonials.'

'I felt that, as someone who knew very little about the subject, the DVD made the whole aspect much more real and had more of an impact.'

## The Sanctuary Project

The film is 23 minutes long and can be split into five chapters:

- Why People Flee
- Arrival
- Accessing Services
- Impact of the Asylum Process
- Perspectives on Mental Health
- Recovery and Resilience

Recommendations for use:

1. Show the film in its entirety
2. Show the film with subtitles (use option in main menu 'with subtitles')
3. Show the film in conjunction with this resource pack

This resource pack provides background to the film, suggestions on how to use it, relevant facts and figures, and ideas for further learning and action. Please note that as an introductory resource this film is not intended as a comprehensive guide to mental health or the asylum process.

The research 'Mosaics of Meaning: Exploring Asylum Seekers and Refugees Views on the Stigma Associated with Mental Health Problems' (full report available through [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)) found that mental health problems were particularly prevalent among refugees and asylum seekers and that they faced significant barriers to accessing services. Following the publication of this research, the Sanctuary Project was developed to respond to this need. The film was subsequently developed to improve awareness among key service providers of the factors that impact on the mental health of those seeking sanctuary in the UK. The film was commissioned in 2008 by the Sanctuary Project and produced in 2009 by a specialist filmmaker - Diversity Films.

Partners in the Sanctuary Project were NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Scottish Refugee Council, Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture Scotland, Mental Health Foundation, and Voices Of eXperience. Funders were NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Health Scotland.

## How to use the film

The film works best when there is an opportunity for discussion as there are many issues explored in it which can cause reactions and raise questions among the audience.

We suggest you do the following:

1. Set aside at least one hour in total. Allow 23 minutes for watching the film and the remainder for discussion.
2. Watch the film together as a group.
3. Plan some questions for discussion following the film.

Example questions for a general audience:

1. How do you feel having watched the film?
2. What did you expect?
3. What did you find surprising?
4. What are the main issues being experienced by the contributors?
5. What action might you want to take as an individual?

Example specific questions for health and social care professionals:

1. How might the issues in the film impact on people's mental health and wellbeing?
2. What might you need to do differently?
3. What are the implications for working with interpreters?

If you have more time, here are some other suggestions:

1. In advance of watching the film do some research: look at the news or cut out articles about asylum seekers and refugees from a variety of papers and publications. What messages are put across? How do these messages compare/contrast with the messages in the film?
2. Set up a pre-viewing discussion. Using the information in this pack, set up a short quiz to open up discussion before watching the film.
3. After watching the film and using the information in this pack, consider whether you are left with any unanswered questions. Allocate questions arising from the group to different people to research. Agree to meet again at a later date to discuss findings.

The following paragraphs provide additional information that may be useful in the discussions that follow a screening of the film. This information is intended to provide answers to the most common questions. Please bear in mind that some of this information is subject to change.

### **Who is a 'refugee' and who is an 'asylum seeker'?**

In the context of the UK immigration system, the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker' mean the following:

**An asylum seeker** is someone who has requested permission to remain in the UK because of the persecution they would face if they returned to their country of origin, but whose case is still being assessed. The UK Border Agency, a branch of the Home Office, is responsible for assessing and making decisions on asylum claims.

**A refugee** is someone who has been recognised by the UK Border Agency as facing persecution in their country. They therefore have permission to remain in the UK and have many of the same rights as a UK citizen.

### **Where do refugees come from?**

Overwhelmingly, refugees come from countries with severe and well documented human rights abuses, internal conflicts and violently repressive governments. Some of the most common nations for refugees in the UK to come from are:

**Iraq**, which is plagued by religious and ethnic conflict and where there are targeted killings of academics, homosexuals and political figures.

**Iran**, where religious converts and political campaigners are at risk and where women may suffer severe punishment for perceived immoral behaviour.

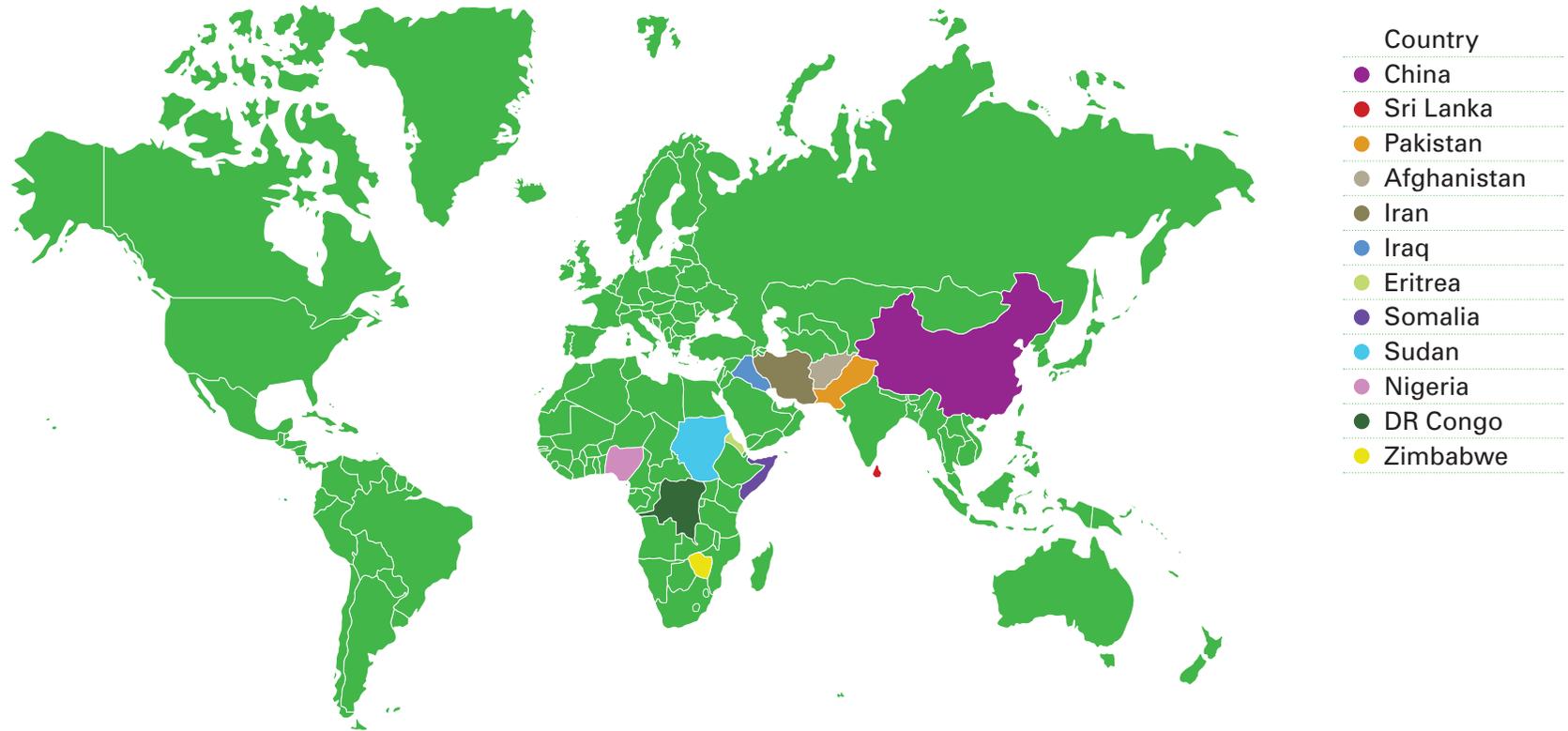
**Somalia**, a country torn apart by years of civil war and where militant groups commit acts of extreme cruelty against civilians without being punished.

**Zimbabwe**, where the government routinely uses intimidation and false imprisonment to oppress anyone suspected of political disagreement. Allegations of torture are widespread.

For up-to-date information on refugee nationalities please use the link below:

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/0410/WhereRefugeesAreComingFrom.pdf](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/0410/WhereRefugeesAreComingFrom.pdf)

By contrast we see very few asylum applications from some of these countries' neighbours, showing that it is not the economic state of a country that causes people to flee, but conflict and persecution. There are many countries with high levels of poverty but where there is little evidence of human rights abuses. Asylum claims from these countries are very rare.



### Where do refugees flee to?

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states that 80–90% of refugees remain in their area of origin, the majority in a country neighbouring their own. This is because they are unable to travel any further. The ability to travel further requires many things including: the financial means to pay for the journey, and contact with people who can arrange documents and transportation. A striking example is Afghanistan. Afghans make up the largest proportion of the world's refugees. 96% of Afghan refugees flee to and remain in either Iran or Pakistan. Only 4% are able to travel further afield. As a result, Pakistan hosts more refugees than any other country in the world.

### Are there many asylum seekers in Scotland?

Asylum seekers make up less than 0.05% of the population of Scotland. According to Home Office figures in recent years there have usually been as few as 2500 asylum seekers supported in Scotland. This is in stark contrast to many countries in the developing world. In one year South Africa received almost as many applications for asylum as all 27 EU states.

## **What are the rights of asylum seekers in the UK?**

Asylum seekers lead very restricted lives in the UK. The vast majority of asylum seekers do not have permission to work and are subject to strict requirements including a reporting regime, interviews and the continued threat of detention. Reporting is similar to 'bail' in many ways. Asylum seekers are required to go to an identified Home Office branch on a particular day and time to report, usually on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. They are also required to undergo interviews to prove the authenticity of their claim and these involve lengthy, repetitive and invasive questioning as well as the required disclosure of past traumatic experiences. All asylum seekers face an ongoing risk of detention. If someone is detained they will be held in a facility similar to a prison. The period of detention can be anything from days to years, while the Home Office makes arrangements to enforce their removal from the UK.

## **What benefits do asylum seekers receive?**

Asylum seekers receive a very low level of financial support from the Home Office to meet their living needs. The majority live in poverty. Most asylum seekers receive between £5 and £6 per day and are not entitled to any mainstream benefits. This rate of financial support is equivalent to between 55% and 70% of income support rates. In addition, some asylum seekers receive financial support through a payment card and have no access to cash. This prevents them from being able to pay for such essentials as public transport and communication costs. A significant proportion of asylum seekers also experience periods of total destitution when they receive no financial support or accommodation at all.

## Want to learn more?

You may find that following your viewing of this film you have identified some areas where you would like further information, skills or training. We have collated some information here about ways in which you may take this forward.

### **The Sanctuary Project**

The Sanctuary Project runs training on working with asylum seekers and refugees covering aspects such as reasons why people flee, the asylum process, torture and its consequences, life in exile, working across culture and impact on the worker. For more information and to find out about current courses being run please contact Neil Quinn: [neil.quinn2@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:neil.quinn2@ggc.scot.nhs.uk) or phone 0141 950 3142.

### **Scottish Refugee Council**

Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice and information to people seeking asylum and refugees living in Scotland. Scottish Refugee Council has been delivering training on the needs of those seeking sanctuary in Scotland since 2005. The organisation's training programme has developed extensively in this time and we now deliver around 35 courses a year on a range of topics.

Please visit [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/training](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/training)

## **Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture**

The Medical Foundation is a human rights organisation which works towards ensuring that the UK meets its obligations to survivors of torture, many of whom are asylum seekers or refugees. The Medical Foundation has been providing therapy, practical support and writing medico-legal reports for survivors of torture in the UK for over 25 years. It also provides training on many aspects relating to working with survivors of torture and will design training to meet the particular needs of the team. Supervision and consultation to teams and individuals working with survivors of torture is also provided. Alternatively, someone from the organisation could come and meet with your team or group to talk about the work the Medical Foundation carries out with survivors of torture. Please contact Medical Foundation Scotland on 0141 420 3161 for further information or visit: [www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)

## **Compass**

Compass is an NHS team working in Glasgow with refugees and asylum seekers of all ages who have moderate to severe mental health problems and a history of trauma. Compass can provide training, placements, telephone consultancy, monthly discussion groups or the possibility to attend a clinical team meeting if you work for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Please contact Compass on 0141 630 4985 for further information.

## **British Red Cross**

The British Red Cross helps people in crisis, wherever and wherever they are. The Positive Images toolkit is an educational resource for teachers, youth workers and other educators that can be used to teach young people, aged 12 and over, about migration and development. The Positive Images toolkit can be found through the following link: [www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Teaching-resources/Teaching-packages/Positive-Images/Toolkit](http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Teaching-resources/Teaching-packages/Positive-Images/Toolkit) or please contact the British Red Cross on 0141 337 6801 for further information.

# Useful websites for further information

Facts and figures provided in this pack are correct as of 2011, for more up-to-date information, the following websites provide some recommended resources:

## **Amnesty International**

Web: [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

Features concise annual reports on all countries where human rights abuses occur.

## **Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (HARP)**

Web: [www.harpweb.org.uk](http://www.harpweb.org.uk)

Directory of information and resources on the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees covering:

- Men, women and children
- Social and cultural information
- Practical resources
- Multilingual appointment card feature
- Mental health

## **Human Rights Watch**

Web: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Features country reports, up-to-date information on world events and briefings on various global issues.

## **Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture**

Web: [www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)

Features reports on human rights abuses and torture in various countries, a Health Worker's Guide and archived publications and papers on human rights, torture and asylum.

## **Medact**

Web: [www.medact.org](http://www.medact.org)

The refugee and asylum health section includes:

- the refugee health network
- directories for those working in asylum seeker and refugee health
- publications on refugee health needs
- information on accessing the NHS
- translated materials.

## **Refugee Council**

Web: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

The 'advice for advisers' page includes:

- support packs for asylum seeker and refugee advisors on the asylum process
- rights and entitlements for asylum seekers and refugees
- the 'Information' section has advice in various languages on:
  - claiming asylum
  - racial harassment
  - refusal of asylum.

## **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – The UN Refugee Agency**

Web: [www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)

Provides a source of current international statistics and articles.

## **UK Border Agency**

Web: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Provides Home Office advice and information on matters relating to immigration, permission to stay, work permits, citizenship and asylum.

## **BBC News**

Web: [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)

Features international breaking news and news archives.

## Taking further action

You may find that watching this film inspires you to take action to try to put right some of the injustices highlighted. The following are some suggestions for taking further action:

### **Scottish Detainee Visitors**

To visit and support detainees at Dungavel detention centre near Glasgow:  
Web: [www.sdv.org.uk/index.html](http://www.sdv.org.uk/index.html)  
Email: [coordinator@sdv.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@sdv.org.uk)

### **National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns**

To write in support of individual people facing removal or deportation:  
Tel: 01479 841 770  
Web: [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk)  
Email: [ncadc@ncadc.org.uk](mailto:ncadc@ncadc.org.uk)

### **Bridges Programmes**

To be a mentor for a refugee in Glasgow:  
Tel: 0141 445 4464  
Web: [www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/31738.html](http://www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/31738.html)

### **Still Human Still Here**

To write letters and emails in protest against destitution as an immigration tool:  
Web: <http://stillhumanstillhere.wordpress.com/>

### **Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture**

To volunteer if you are a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychologist, psychiatrist or GP, or in an administration role:  
Address: Room 27, The Adelphi Centre, 12 Commercial Road, Glasgow G5 0PQ  
Tel: 0141 420 3161  
Email: [mfscotland@torturecare.org.uk](mailto:mfscotland@torturecare.org.uk)  
Web: [www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)

### **Refugee Survival Trust**

If you can make a donation to provide emergency financial support to destitute asylum seekers:  
Tel: 0131 243 2660  
Web: [www.rst.org.uk/](http://www.rst.org.uk/)

### **Positive Action in Housing**

If you have a spare room and would be able to offer accommodation to a destitute asylum seeker in the short term:  
Address: 98 West George Street, Glasgow G2 1PJ  
Tel: 0141 353 2220  
Web: [www.paih.org/](http://www.paih.org/)

### **Scottish Refugee Council**

There are a range of volunteering roles from working to support asylum seekers to assisting with research and policy.  
Address: 5 Cadogan Square, Glasgow G2 7PH  
Web: [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/support\\_us/volunteer](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/support_us/volunteer)

### **Member of Parliament**

Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are there to help with those matters for which Parliament or central government is responsible. You can write to your MP or MSP about matters of local or national concern, such as the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees. The link below can help you find the contact details for your MP.  
Web: [www.parliament.uk/about/contacting/mp/](http://www.parliament.uk/about/contacting/mp/)