

## Did you know?

- Over 1 billion people in the world are estimated to be migrants, including 244 million international migrants in 2015.
- At least 70 million people throughout the world are thought to have Irish ancestry.
- In the 1970s and 1980s more people left here than came here to live, only between 2004 and 2010 did immigration exceed emigration.
- As the economy began to recover, 2,200 more migrants came here than left in 2013–14.
- The 2011 Census indicated that only 6.9% of people living in N Ireland were born outside the UK (or 4.5% if we exclude people born in the Republic of Ireland), compared to 13% in Great Britain.
- Around 65.3 million people in the world were forcibly displaced due to persecution, violence or human rights violations by the end of 2015. Of these, 21.3 million were refugees, 4.9 million as a result of the Syrian conflict.
- Most refugees from war zones or areas of civil unrest flee to neighbouring countries, often the poorest in the world.
- The main countries hosting refugees in 2015 were Turkey (2.5 million), Pakistan (1.6 million), Lebanon (1.1 million), Iran (979,400) and Ethiopia (736,100).
- Conflict has caused a recent increase in numbers of people seeking asylum in industrialised countries such as the UK, with around 32,000 applications in 2015, still well below the peak number of over 84,000 applications in 2002.
- The Refugee Council says that the UK was home to fewer than 1% of the world's refugees in 2015.

## EMBRACE NI

### *Building a Welcoming Community*

**EMBRACE** is a group of Christians from different denominations, working together to promote a positive response to people seeking asylum, migrant workers and people from minority ethnic backgrounds in N Ireland. EMBRACE seeks to reflect gospel values, and equip the Church to fulfil its call to welcome the stranger, by providing information, training, and resource materials, and acting as a channel to assist those in need.

**EMBRACE** can offer talks, workshops and information events on the topics of migration awareness and refugee awareness.

**EMBRACE Emergency Fund** is used to provide vital emergency assistance to destitute foreign nationals and people seeking asylum, where no other means of support, either statutory or charitable, is available.

### Thinking of Joining Us?

If you are not already a member of EMBRACE, please consider joining us. Subscriptions are £10.00 annually per person and £20.00 for groups. Please write to us at the address below.

### Making a Donation?

If you would like to make a donation towards our work please send a cheque, payable to EMBRACE. Your support is greatly appreciated.

### For more information contact us:

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# WHO'S WHO? WHO'S HERE? 2017



**Society here is changing and many local people are confused as to who the newcomers are and why they are here. This leaflet hopes to answer some common questions.**

## People Seeking Asylum & Refugees

### Q Who is an asylum seeker?

A A person who is looking for a safe place outside her/his own country. People seek asylum if they fear persecution in their own country because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, social group or political opinion.

### Q What is our obligation to people seeking asylum?

A The UK signed the 1951 UN Convention Relating to Refugees, and has agreed to allow people who enter the country to apply for asylum here. They have a legal right to be here while their application is considered.

### Q Who is a refugee?

A In the UK it is someone who applies for asylum, and is successful in being granted refugee status but 'refugee' is also commonly used as a general term for all people who have been displaced from their own countries by persecution, war and civil unrest. A small number of people who have been granted refugee status by the UN Refugee Agency come to the UK to be resettled.

### Q Do many people come here to seek asylum?

A No separate figures are published but the annual number of applications is known to be in the low hundreds. In August 2015 there were a total of 600 people waiting to have their asylum applications assessed and their most common country of origin were China, Somalia, Sudan, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Five countries of origin made up just under 80% of the total: China (147), Zimbabwe (34), Nigeria (35), Sudan (36) and Somalia (38). Many applications are unsuccessful. Past estimates suggest that the number of refugees living in N Ireland is in the low thousands. A small number of Syrian people who have been granted refugee status by the UN Refugee Agency have been resettled here.

### Q Do people seeking asylum come here because of our benefits system?

A Recent research shows that most people who escape to the UK have no knowledge of our benefits system. The allowance for a person whose asylum application is under consideration is £36.95, plus accommodation, as at December 2016.

For more detailed information see [www.embraceni.org/category/information/asylum/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/information/asylum/)

## Migrants

### Q Who is a migrant worker?

A Someone who leaves his/her country to seek work elsewhere. The term is usually applied to people who do not plan to remain permanently in another country. If a person from Lisburn goes to Canada or Dublin to work, he or she is a migrant worker.

### Q Who is an immigrant?

A All people coming into the country to work are immigrants, but the word is usually applied to people who intend to settle and integrate here. People who are born here are not 'immigrants'. Many minority-ethnic groups have been here for generations.

## Migrant Workers

### Q Who is entitled to work here?

- A This depends mostly on their country of origin.
- People from the **European Economic Area (EEA)**, with the exception of those from Croatia, do not need permission to come here and work. In the same way, for example, anyone with a British or Irish passport can go freely to Spain or Germany to seek work. (The EEA includes the European Union States plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.)
  - Croatia joined the EU in July 2013 but under transitional arrangements its nationals have very restricted access to our jobs market for a number of years. [www.gov.uk/croatian-national](http://www.gov.uk/croatian-national)
  - The immigration system favours people from Europe. The coalition Government has put a cap on the total numbers of migrant workers coming here from outside the EEA. Employers must register as sponsors in order to employ people from countries such as the Philippines and India on **Work Permits** and demonstrate that the posts cannot be filled by the domestic labour force.
  - Some **Foreign Students** may work part time.
  - Some temporary staff such as diplomats and representatives of foreign firms are **Permit-Free Workers**.

Read more at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration) and [www.embraceni.org/category/migration/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/migration/)

### Q Why is there migration today?

A There has always been migration. Anyone from N Ireland is likely to have relatives abroad because their ancestors left here for many different reasons. People come here now because declining birth rates in industrialised countries have meant that fewer young people have been joining the work force. There is also greater ease of communication and international transport is cheaper and more readily available.

### Q How many migrants have come here recently?

A The 2011 census showed that 95.49% of the people living in N Ireland were born in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. Of the remaining 4.51%, 45,407 were born in the rest of the European Union, and 36,046 in other countries. It is estimated that 175,000 long-term international migrants arrived here between 2000 and 2014 but only 32,000 remained long term. Because of the financial crisis and recession, between 2009 and 2013 more people left than arrived. There has been a small upturn recently, with 2,237 more people arriving than leaving between July 2013 and June 2014.

### Q Do we really need migrant workers?

A Migrant workers tend to come here because they hear of job vacancies. We have skills gaps and labour shortages, especially in hospitals and nursing homes, food processing, farming, IT and service industries.

### Q Do they cost us money?

A There are costs because of increased pressure on medical, education and housing services but migrant workers pay tax and national insurance like everyone else. They contribute to the local economy by paying rent and buying food, clothing and other necessities.

### Q What about jobs for local people?

A Migrants usually fill jobs that local people do not do or cannot do. Unemployment was at its lowest when inward migration was at its height.

EMBRACE is grateful to the Refugee and Migrant Project of the Irish Bishop's Conference for devising the concept of this leaflet. Their *Who's Who* leaflet for the Irish Republic is available from [http://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/images/stories/cco\\_publications/refugees/who%20who%20200910.pdf](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/images/stories/cco_publications/refugees/who%20who%20200910.pdf)