

# ITEM 10

*Your Reference*

Mr Charles Clarke MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
LONDON  
SW1H 9AT

*Our Reference*  
MB/mas

*Date*  
24 January 2005

*Contact*  
Cllr Maurice Burgess

*Telephone*      *Fax*  
01332 258454    01332 256269

*E-mail:*  
maurice.burgess@derby.gov.uk

Dear Mr Clarke

## **FAILED ASYLUM SEEKERS**

I chair the Council's Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory Committee – MECAC – and the Committee has requested that I write to you to express its members' deep concerns about the existing and growing problem in Derby of failed asylum seekers. The Committee has members from both long-standing and emerging minority ethnic communities in the city – including representatives from the Pakistani, Indian, African, Caribbean, Iraqi-Kurds, Congolese, Somali, Bosnian-Herzegovinian communities.

The Council's Chief Executive, and the Derby Refugee Forum, have already exchanged correspondence with your office. But, up to now, you have not been prepared to accept that it is the inflexibility of government policies that is causing destitution among failed asylum seekers, and the inevitable social problems that flow from this. The very real problems perceived by the long-standing minority ethnic communities in the inner city where most of the supported and failed asylum seeker communities live, are:

- promoting a culture of illegal work with poor pay and conditions undermining legitimate businesses, despite very active police action
- increase in abuse of drugs and alcohol, and related crime
- increased risk of community tension and disorder as we house within the city increasing numbers of bored young men without a stake in our society
- increase in xenophobic reactions as newcomers are seen to be either idle or working illegally, so fulfilling extremist stereotypes.

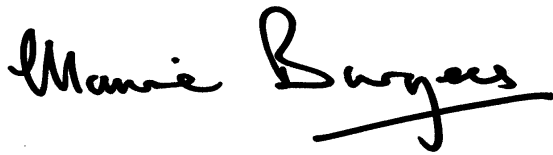
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MECAC urges you in particular to reconsider the policy which does not allow asylum seekers to work legally while awaiting the time when they can safely return home.

The Council has already suggested to you that Derby be supported to create a pilot project allowing flexibility in relation to employment. We would urge you to give serious consideration to this proposal which we would be delighted to work up with NASS.

I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maurice Burgess". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Maurice Burgess  
Leader of the Council

**Copy:**

Ray Cowlshaw, Chief Executive  
Sue Glithero, Director of Policy  
Bob Laxton MP  
Cllr Balbir Samra