

# Activity Sheet 1.4

## 11. Shop wherever you want

Asylum seekers may spend their £10 (cash) a week wherever they like; the vouchers, however, can only be spent in specified stores. The vouchers cannot usually be spent in markets or small shops.

## 12. Be able to vote

Asylum seekers may not vote in any elections. However, people with full refugee status have all the same rights as everyone else, so they are entitled to vote.

## 13. Have access to an interpreter

When an asylum seeker arrives in the country they are required to have an initial interview with the Immigration Services, when they are entitled to have an interpreter. Because of financial restrictions, however, it is not possible for interpreters in a complete range of languages to be on hand all the time, so there will be times when asylum seekers will not have access to one.

## 14. Live in a city of your own choice

When an asylum seeker arrives in this country, if their case cannot be dealt with very quickly, then they have one of the following housing options:

1. if they have sufficient money they may seek their own accommodation
2. if they have friends or family living in the country they may stay with them
3. if these two options are not possible or chosen then the asylum seeker(s) will be part of the Home Office dispersal programme. This will involve either:
  - a) being sent to live in parts of the country outside London and the south-east. This is because most asylum seekers live in London or the south-east, and the government believes that these areas cannot cope with any more people;
  - or b) if there is sufficient local property then asylum seekers may be placed in local housing.

If an asylum seeker has been placed in housing through the dispersal programme, they must remain there or lose any entitlements to housing.

## 15. Have access to a solicitor

Asylum seekers may contact a solicitor or legal representative of their choice at any stage of the asylum procedure. However there is no obligation on interviewing officers (asylum seekers are interviewed when they first arrive in the country) to make asylum seekers aware of this fact.

Because many asylum seekers live below the poverty line, they are eligible for legal aid. This means they are entitled to the services of a solicitor free of charge for some parts of their application process and other meetings.

