

Personal Stories from Migrants in Britain & Ireland



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Jane a migrant living in Ireland

Jane is an African-American woman, has been living and working in Donegal, Ireland for decades and has full citizenship. When she travels to Dublin by bus she is sometimes targeted by immigration officials who regularly carry out spot checks at the border with Northern Ireland. She feels that the only basis for her being selected over others is her skin colour.

A young Nigerian couple living in Wales

A young Nigerian couple live in Wrexham with their two children. She had refugee status so was allowed to remain while he was an asylum-seeker whose request to remain was under investigation. She was unable to care for her children due to mental depression so the father had assumed most of the parental responsibilities. On one of his regular visits to the local police station to register he was picked up by the immigration police and placed in detention with a view to his being

returned to Nigeria. The children had to be placed in foster care and the mother was left distraught and vulnerable. After urgent legal representation and several telephone calls from local support agencies the father was eventually released and the family was re-united.

Aslem a refugee from Afghanistan living in England

People were so unhelpful. They could see easily that I was someone who needed help, but I was not given any. It was as if everyone wanted me to go back to where I started and not be a problem. It was difficult to get an interpreter, it was difficult to get a hostel. Everything was so much trouble and I felt as if I was giving people a lot of hard work and that is not a nice feeling. If they are there to help people, why make them feel bad about getting that help? I knew very little English and had to ask other people from my country to tell me things over and over again. I was so confused and had to get used to everything from the money to trains and buses. Even the names and faces of people were confusing. When you are a new student, and you are trying to understand what teachers are saying, it is difficult if the others are shouting and playing. And it is even more difficult if it is you they are joking about.

Melitta, a refugee from Mozambique living in Ireland

The people you know and trust and who can answer your questions all say goodbye when you leave your country. They cannot say what you will see when you get here and so you come and you are by yourself and this part is never ever talked of. You think the war and the problems back home are now finished but here your other problems really start.



A young Ethiopian girl living in Wales

The Wrexham Asylum Refugee Support Group (WRASS) has been supporting a young Ethiopian girl who has been made homeless by the UK Border Agency while she awaits the outcome of her appeal to remain in Britain. This has resulted in a lot of stress to her.

David a church minister from India living in Scotland

It was summer 2005 that my wife and I came to Glasgow, Scotland. Coming from India, the sub-continent, we had a few cultural shocks in the first few months. Being a committed Christian, Church is part and parcel of my life. The Church we visited on the first Sunday of our arrival was a significant one. I say it because we were accepted by the congregation. The brothers and sisters in the assembly made us feel at home.

Naturally, when you are in a foreign land, everything is new to you like place, people and surroundings. You will feel isolated. In my case, it wasn't true because the Church played a vital role in giving us support. I have noticed and personally experienced the Churches not only preach love but reveal it in deeds. Christ's love is demonstrated in the action of churches. I can testify in volumes how the churches here are involved in helping people to provide food, clothing and shelter.

Melake a refugee from Ethiopia living in England

Immigration responses need to be faster and more humane to believe people when they say their age and that. Schools should have teachers who understand that children come from different education systems, and people in general should not think of all refugees as lying in order to stay here, especially like things they say in the news and newspapers.

Carmen an economic migrant from the Philippines living in England

I am a nursing assistant. I really like my job and am grateful for the opportunities that working in the UK has given me. Through my trade union I know the UK has a falling birth rate and an ageing population. If there were not migrant workers, the work simply wouldn't get done. So without migrant workers the public services would be in real trouble. Migrant workers make up 19% of social workers, 16% of care workers, 11% of housing/welfare workers, and 10% of nursing assistants, 8% of education assistants. So in total, around 13% of all workers in health, education and public administration are migrants.