



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

Amanda Hume
Coventry City Council
Room 26
Council House
Earl Street
Coventry
West Midlands
CV1 5RR

77 Paradise Circus Queensway
Birmingham B1 2DT

Dear Amanda Hume

1. ESF OBJECTIVE 3 – REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS - CHANGE TO THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ESF BENEFICIARIES.

To be eligible for support from the European Social Fund an individual must be able to undertake paid employment in a European Union member state.

Asylum seekers are individuals who are seeking leave to remain in the UK; refugees are those individuals whose status has already been established. This means that asylum seekers are not generally eligible for support for ESF but that refugees are.

Until recently, if an application from an asylum seeker was not dealt with in six months then the individual concerned was granted special status. This status enabled them to take paid employment whilst their application was being assessed, which meant that they could be supported by ESF.

Decisions on asylum applications are now being made quickly, so it has been decided that there is no need for asylum seekers to be granted this concession.

Those asylum seekers who currently have permission to work are unaffected, as these new arrangements are not retrospective. New asylum seekers cannot be ESF beneficiaries unless they were granted permission to work before this policy change. An exception to this is the Equal programme where orientation provision is available to asylum seekers.

Amended ESF guidance is due to be released later this year and will reflect this change.