



# Home Office

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**HOME SECRETARY**  
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Rt Hon. Tessa Jowell MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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CTS Ref: M5313/10  
Your Ref: 01100579

12 APR 2010

Thank you for your letter of 26 March, on behalf of a number of your constituents regarding rates of support for asylum seekers.

We review support rates for asylum seekers on an annual basis, to ensure the amount provided is sufficient to meet the essential living needs of asylum seekers. When setting the levels of subsistence support, we take into account the temporary nature of the support provided to asylum seekers and the fact they have access to fully furnished, rent free accommodation with utilities (including heating) and council tax included. It is for this reason that asylum support rates are lower than rates of Income Support.

Since 2008, increases to asylum support rates have been based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September (the month used by the Department of Work and Pensions to determine the uplift to benefit rates). The CPI rate for September 2009 was 1.1%. We intend to continue that practice, and implement a 1.1% increase to the amount of financial support provided to all categories of asylum seekers supported by the Home Office under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The Asylum Support (Amendment) Regulations 2010 were laid before Parliament on 16 March and will enable the changes to come into effect on 12 April 2010.

The revised support rates are set out in the following table:

Qualifying couple	£70.34
Lone parent aged 18 or over	£42.62
Single person aged 25 or over (where the decision to grant support was made prior to 5 October 2009 and the person reached age 25 prior to that date)	£42.62
Any other single person aged 18 or over	£35.52
Person aged at least 16 but under 18 (except a member of a qualifying couple)	£38.60
Person aged under 16	£51.37

On 12 April 2010, there will also be an increase to the level of support provided under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which is paid to eligible failed asylum seekers who face a legitimate barrier to return. The value of this increase will also be 1.1% in line with the CPI for September 2009. Those in receipt of section 4 support will see their weekly payment automatically adjusted to reflect this change from 12 April 2010.

I want to make it absolutely clear that the Government does not have a policy of destitution. The UK's asylum support policy is properly balanced and sufficient to meet essential living needs, and no person who has sought our protection need be destitute whilst waiting for an application to be decided. The UK Border Agency provides support to asylum seekers from the time they arrive in the UK, until their claim is finally determined.

Yours  
Alan

**Alan Johnson**