

PROTECTING ASYLUM SEEKERS

In response to Immigration Minister, Phil Woolas's comments in Monday's Guardian that groups who support asylum seekers are not helping the system, the North of England Refugee Service Chief Executive Office, Daoud Zaaroura, said "To leave people who have been refused asylum destitute on the streets, and vulnerable to exploitation is not in the best interests of any of our communities."

"Our support workers work closely with the UK Border Agency everyday to ensure that the right decisions are being made, and that as few people as possible are left without any support or a roof over their heads."

NERS as a registered charity, is regulated by the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and the Legal Services Commission, thus ensuring a free professional service within recognised regulations and legal boundaries.

"Abandoning vulnerable people is incompatible with the traditions of the people in our country." added Mr Zaaroura, "Over the years, thousands of people in the North East have donated money and given their time as volunteers to support refugees and people seeking asylum, and many have also volunteered to work overseas when and wherever the need arises. I know that the work we do is recognised and valued, not only by our clients, but also by the north east communities and the agencies we work in partnership with - including the Home Office."

For further information, please contact Daoud Zaaroura, NERS CEO, on 0191 245 7311.