

Innovative and influential, the *Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum* brings together a wide range of charities which work in partnership to promote the rights of women seeking asylum.

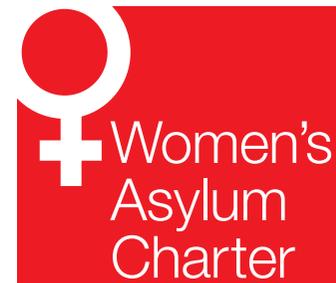
The *Charter* represents a unique style of campaigning, and encourages and inspires all its endorsers to develop its key principles of fair, dignified and safe treatment of any woman who seeks asylum in the UK.

Campaigning through the *Charter* gathers strength from a multiplier effect, as each action draws on and amplifies the role of all the charities lined up behind it. This, and the unceasing persistence of all the *Charter's* endorsers, means that gender is now clearly on the agenda for lasting, meaningful reform of the asylum system.

In its five years, the *Charter* has enjoyed significant impact. And its work fighting for the rights of women seeking asylum continues.

www.asylumaid.org.uk/charter

**FIVE
YEARS
ON**



Five years ago, Asylum Aid launched the *Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum* with a small group of charities. Now there are more than 300 of us.

And because of the *Charter*...

as a woman seeking asylum

- You will be interviewed by another woman
- Your children will be looked after
- Your case will be handled by someone with specific training

and now

- More government resources are committed to women and asylum than ever before
- A senior official oversees all women's issues in the asylum system



5 years progress under the Charter

2009

- The Every Single Woman campaign was launched to demand that women seeking asylum are treated with dignity and respect



The Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum was founded in 2008 by charities and NGOs who had seen too many women left vulnerable and exposed. The Charter's call for gender-sensitive reforms to the asylum system is now endorsed by more than 300 organisations across the country, and lays out an efficient, joined-up asylum system which meets the needs of the women who might turn to it.

Huffington Post 2013

I have just seen your excellent impact report on the Charter – I have never seen anything attempted quite like this and I think it is really quite superb!

**Jonathan Ellis
Former Director of Advocacy
Refugee Council**

We have endorsed the Charter because it highlights some specific gender issues facing women seeking sanctuary and also it represents hope for us.

We believe that it is a useful tool to engage the UKBA (UK Border Agency) to treat women fairly and with dignity during the asylum process and therefore have some better chances to rebuild their lives.

**Women Seeking Sanctuary
Advocacy Group Wales**

2010

- The Every Single Woman film is shown to Home Office staff on International Women's Day, including Secretary of State Meg Hillier

- Why Refugee Women develops its own *Why Refugee Women Charter* for Yorkshire and Humber, calling on local organisations to improve their treatment of refugee women

- The Charter inspires refugee women at the Govan and Craigton Integration Group Network near Glasgow to launch a postcard campaign. Hundreds of messages calling for the fair treatment of asylum seeking women are sent directly to the Home Secretary

2011

- Asylum Aid's report *Unsustainable* persuades the Home Office to introduce new training on women's asylum issues for all asylum decision-makers

NewStatesman

Medical Justice's Expecting Change report backs calls made by Asylum Aid in its women's charter, which was signed by 337 different organisations, for an end to the detention of pregnant women. Asylum seeking women have poorer health outcomes during and after childbirth than others. Many women in the report were victims of rape, torture and trafficking.

New Statesman 2013

2012

- Nearly 1,000 people join the Missed Out campaign, lobbying their MPs and writing to the Home Office. The Home Secretary promises more resources to help women seeking asylum

No woman should be missed out

The fact that gender-sensitive asylum processes have been given prominence in a Government Plan of Action is a cause for celebration and clear recognition of the tremendous work that has been undertaken by yourselves and the Charter supporters.

**Elizabeth Mpyisi
UN Refugee Agency**

2013

- The #DignityinPregnancy campaign, led by Refugee Council and Maternity Action, opens negotiations with the Home Office to ensure women seeking asylum are not sent all over the country during pregnancy

- Medical Justice's report *Expecting Change* draws on the support of all the Charter's endorsers to argue for ending the immigration detention of all pregnant women

- The Refugee Women's Strategy Group publish *Making Asylum Work for Women*, following up the Charter with demands for a fair asylum system – written by women who have direct experience of everything that can go wrong when they ask for protection here

- Persistent pressure from Charter endorsers results in improved new policies for women seeking asylum who are new mothers or about to have a baby