

Shocking neglect of psychosis patients exposed

Shocking evidence of discrimination against people with severe mental illness has been uncovered by the Liberal Democrats, as a national survey reveals that a flagship treatment programme for psychosis is not being properly delivered in most parts of the country.

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Press Release: EASO releases overview of 2017 EU+ asylum trends

EU+ receives 43% fewer asylum applications in 2017

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published data on asylum trends in the EU+ in 2017 on a newly enhanced interactive portal. The results show a significant decrease in lodged applications for asylum compared with 2016, with 40% of decisions in 2017 being positive.

In 2017, EU+ countries recorded 706,913 asylum applications ^[1]. This is a decrease of 43% compared to 2016, and the second consecutive year with fewer applications after the unprecedented influx in 2015 and 2016. Despite this decrease, the 2017 total remained at a slightly higher level than the number of applications lodged in 2014, indicating that the asylum-related inflow in the EU+ remained considerable.

In the EU+ as a whole, monthly applications remained stable throughout the year. The monthly number of applications varied from 49,042 in December to 66,443 in March. A seasonal trend, with higher numbers of applications over the summer, was less visible than in the previous three years. The stable trend at EU+ level, however, conceals stark variations at a country level.

About 55,000 applications, or 8% of the total, were **repeated applications** by persons who had already lodged an application previously in the same EU+ country. At least 3.5 % of all applications concerned claimed **unaccompanied minors** (UAM) ^[11].

Syria was the most common country of origin of applicants for the fifth consecutive year, with more than 98,000 applications. Despite a considerable decrease compared to 2016, twice as many Syrians lodged an application for

international protection in the EU+ as any other citizenship. Iraqi, Afghan and Nigerian nationals each lodged more than 40,000 applications in 2017. These four main countries of origin together constituted one in three applications throughout the EU+ in 2017. The top ten countries of origin also included **Pakistan, Eritrea, Albania, Bangladesh, Guinea and Iran**. Of these ten citizenships, only Bangladeshi and Guinean citizens lodged more applications in the EU+ in 2017 than in 2016.

Pending cases at end of 2017 halved from same period in 2016

In 2017, **EU+ countries issued 981,615 decisions at first instance, 13% fewer than in 2016** ^[III]. Despite the decrease, this was the second highest number of first instance decisions ever issued at a European level since data collection began in 2008 ^[IV]. In the EU+ as a whole, 40% of all decisions in first instance were positive^[V]. This recognition rate was 17 percentage points lower than in 2016, a decrease which reflects the combined effect of a higher number of decisions issued on cases with relatively lower recognition rates (such as Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan) and the concurrent decrease in the number of decisions issued to Syrian and Eritrean nationals, which are characterised by higher recognition rates.

At the end of 2017, there were 462,532 applications awaiting a decision in first instance ^[VI]. This is half the number of cases that were pending at the end of 2016 as a result of more first-instance decisions being issued in 2017 than asylum applications lodged. This decrease was reflected in most EU+ countries.

New enhanced [EASO web portal](#) for asylum data

Coinciding with the publication of the data for 2017, EASO has launched a [newly enhanced and interactive portal](#) that allows for the general public and stakeholders to easily source customised information and data relating to asylum trends in the EU+. The data will be updated on a monthly basis.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting press@easo.europa.eu

[I] The EU+ is composed of 28 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland. Data on applications for international protection were available for all 30 EU+ countries. Some monthly data were missing and these are estimated to represent approximately 1,000 applications.

[II] Claimed UAMs represent the asylum applicants claiming to be below the age of 18 years rather than those assessed to be such after an age assessment has been carried out. Several EU+ countries have difficulties reporting on claimed UAMs in the framework of the EPS data exchange. These figures should therefore be considered as underestimations of the actual proportion of claimed UAMs.

[III] Data on first-instance decisions were available for all 30 EU+ countries. Some monthly data were missing.

[IV] When Eurostat started to collect information on asylum decisions.

[V] The EU+ recognition rate includes EU-regulated forms of protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) and excludes national protection forms (humanitarian reasons). It is calculated by dividing the number of positive first-instance decisions (granting refugee status or subsidiary protection) by the total number of decisions issued. [VI] Data on pending cases were available for 29 EU+ countries. Some monthly data were missing.

Press release: Suspended jail term for landowner over illegal landfill site

The Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted a landowner and two men who blighted 19 acres of Cheshire farm land by dumping and landfilling tens of thousands of tonnes of waste.

Mr Eric Hale of Bank Top Farm near Frodsham was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment suspended for two years, disqualified from driving for 12 months ordered to work 200 hours unpaid and have a curfew of 8pm to 6am for three months after pleading guilty to operating an illegal waste site without an environmental permit and dumping and landfilling controlled waste on the land.

Mr Hale also paid £100,000 in contributions towards the Environment Agency's costs. Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street each received a Conditional Discharge for two years after pleading guilty to dumping and landfilling controlled waste.

The Environment Agency brought the case against Mr Eric Hale, Mr Dennis Whiting and Mr Stefan Street after a lengthy investigation. The investigation identified that significant amounts of waste were being brought on to the farm, which did not have an environmental permit.

The Environment Agency identified that the operation of the illegal site was closely connected with a waste company Eric Hale Skip Hire Ltd. The prosecution for the Environment Agency stated that the majority of waste collected by the company was illegally dumped and landfilled at Bank Top Farm instead of being taken to a legitimate waste site.

Tracey Rimmer, Area Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This operation demonstrates how the Environment Agency works in partnership to tackle serious waste crime. We have worked closely with the police and local authorities to pursue these criminals and bring them to justice. Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per year from legitimate business and the treasury.

During the course of the investigation Eric Hale, Steffan Street and Dennis Whiting were seen driving large waste vehicles which delivered, deposited and disposed of mixed waste, demolition waste including plasterboard and other waste including carpets and mattresses.

Trommel fines, which are a by-product produced during the recycling process and consist of materials such as wood, aggregate, glass, ceramics and organics, were also dumped at Bank Top Farm. The unregulated deposit of waste has the potential to cause harm to the environment.

The Judge on sentencing said:

Eric Hale was driven by greed to continue the illegal operation.

Also the court did not accept any of the mitigation of the offending put forward but Eric Hale's substantial personal mitigating circumstances were acknowledged by the court.

If you see waste crime report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Waste crime can cause serious pollution to the environment put communities at risk and undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it. You can call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506 to find out how to responsibly manage any waste your business produces or visit www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview/overview.

[If UK is harmed by Brexit why won't Labour campaign to stay in EU?](#)

Speaking in the House of Commons debate on the release of the full copies of the leaked Brexit papers, I asked Labour's Spokesperson Keir Starmer:

"If these reports confirm that the UK will be harmed, whatever deal the UK strikes with the EU, will Labour campaign to stay in the EU?"

Labour did not answer the question.

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[When it comes to stopping Brexit, it's the Liberal Democrats leading the charge](#)

With a Prime Minister pandering to the extremists on the right of her party; delivering up the most divisive, extreme version of Brexit imaginable and

Corbyn's Labour Party sitting on its hands, letting the bumbling Tories off the hook – we are needed more than ever.

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