

Help immigrants to work, says study

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Government should allow asylum seekers to work immediately on entry to the UK and overseas students to work more than 16 hours a week if it wants to bring more people out of the informal economy, according to ongoing research.

Other likely recommendations of the project, being carried out by charity Community Links' 'What If?' team, include making international qualifications better recognised so that overseas professionals such as doctors will be able to practise in the UK more easily.

The study into the impact of the informal economy – covering jobs in which people do not pay taxes and are not protected by the law – began in November 2004 in Newham, an area with the second highest level of asylum-seekers in the UK, as well as one of the highest numbers of students.

The study's research and development manager, Dennis Katungi, said that the research had drawn on interviews with 118 Newham residents working in the sector. He said that government representatives will be invited to take part in further research.

The full report is expected in December.