

Asylum Support Partnership

help and advice



December 11

ASP Move-On and Integration Advice following cuts to RIES and OSS Services

This statement has been agreed by the Asylum Support Partnership, which brings together key national and regional charitable providers of asylum support services to refugees and asylum seekers, (from arrival to decision) to ensure, through collaborative working, that asylum seekers get the support they need.

Introduction

All UKBA funding for RIES services ended on 1st October 2011, shortly after implementation of a 60% cut to the funding of One Stop Services through which 'move-on' integration services are provided.

Key impacts:

- The impact of policy change and cuts on ASP services has been severe. We can no longer provide any RIES advice and casework support, and OSS capacity has significantly reduced, affecting our ability to provide 'move-on' support. We can now only offer basic information and signposting, and most clients will be referred to a local advice agency where these exist.
- We will also rely much more on volunteers to undertake basic tasks, such as JSA applications and 'move-on' briefings. We will have some capacity to maintain volunteer mentors and advocates at a reduced level. However, volunteers require support and while RIES VAT and Transition Funds will provide some temporary resource towards this, they will run out in early 2012.
- There will be country/region based difference in infrastructure around move-on and integration work. However, any assumption that move-on advice will be 'taken over' by any local voluntary services is unrealistic. In many areas, refugee community organisations do not deliver advice services at all, and would struggle to fill this gap. RCOs are also already stretched to the limit attempting to meet the needs of destitute asylum seekers. Advice services that do exist are already overstretched, and cannot currently see everyone who has a need.

Asylum Support Partnership consists of:

Northern Refugee Centre, charity number: 1078816 www.nrcentre.org.uk

North of England Refugee Service, charity number: 1091200 www.refugee.org.uk

Refugee Action, charity number: 283660 www.refugee-action.org.uk

Refugee Council, charity number: 1014 576 www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Scottish Refugee Council, charity number: SC008639 www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Welsh Refugee Council, charity number: 1044885 www.welshrefugeecouncil.org.uk

They either limit the number they can see on drop-in days, or only take on 'complex' issues such as benefit or homelessness appeals. Some of these generalist advice agencies are due to lose their LSC franchise funding and some will close altogether. As a consequence, refugees may not be able to find anyone at all who is both willing and qualified to meet their integration needs.

- The gaps in service delivery and emerging unmet needs are likely to be in relation to clients with complex needs, for example where JSA applications have gone wrong, those with health needs, the homeless and unemployed.