

# ASP NEWS

No 74

The newsletter for the Asylum Support Partnership March 2008

Welcome to the March Edition of ASP News. This edition features: The renaming of the IAP, Destitution Tally results, Removals to Zimbabwe, Quarterly Statistics for dispersal and support in the UK, Forthcoming ASP monitoring and an update from Migrant Helpline's A2D project.

## Asylum Support Partnership (ASP)

The Inter-Agency Partnership, consisting of the 5 major agencies within the UK – Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Migrant Helpline, Scottish Refugee Council and Welsh Refugee Council, has now been renamed the **Asylum Support Partnership (ASP)** with the Inter-Agency Coordination Team renamed the **Asylum Support Partnership Team (ASPT)** as this better reflects the role of the partnership. This name change is effective immediately.

## Removals to Zimbabwe

The Home Office have begun to send out letters to Zimbabwean Asylum Seekers whose claims have been refused, informing them of a recent court case and informing them that they must return home.

The court case looked at whether it was too dangerous for any refused Asylum Seekers to be forcibly removed to Zimbabwe; a final decision on this case is due shortly.

Anyone that receives a letter or is affected by this ruling, it is very important that clients contact a solicitor if they have:

- Any new reasons or evidence that shows they would be in danger if returned to Zimbabwe, for example political links that would be known by the authorities, or;
- Personal ties to the UK, for example children or relationships.

## The Destitution Tally

From the 19<sup>th</sup> November through to the 14<sup>th</sup> December the 5 IAP agencies recorded the proportion of clients accessing their One Stop Services who were destitute.

For the purpose of this monitoring exercise destitution was defined as someone who is: "currently with no access to benefits/BIA support/income and are either street homeless or staying with a friend only temporarily."

The Asylum Support Partnership Team received in total 3466 responses from across the five agencies.

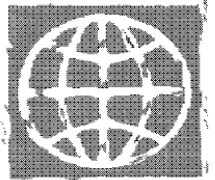
The results showed:

- Over 40% of the people using the Refugee Agencies' services were destitute.
- Over 25% of the destitute clients are pursuing a claim for asylum and so are likely to be legally entitled to support.
- Most destitute clients seen were refused Asylum Seekers.
- Some destitute people had been granted asylum or had not yet claimed asylum

To view the full Destitution Tally please follow the link below:

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy/responses/2008/Destitution.htm>

The Destitution Tally will be discussed at the next National Asylum Stakeholders Forum (NASF) on the 20<sup>th</sup> March.

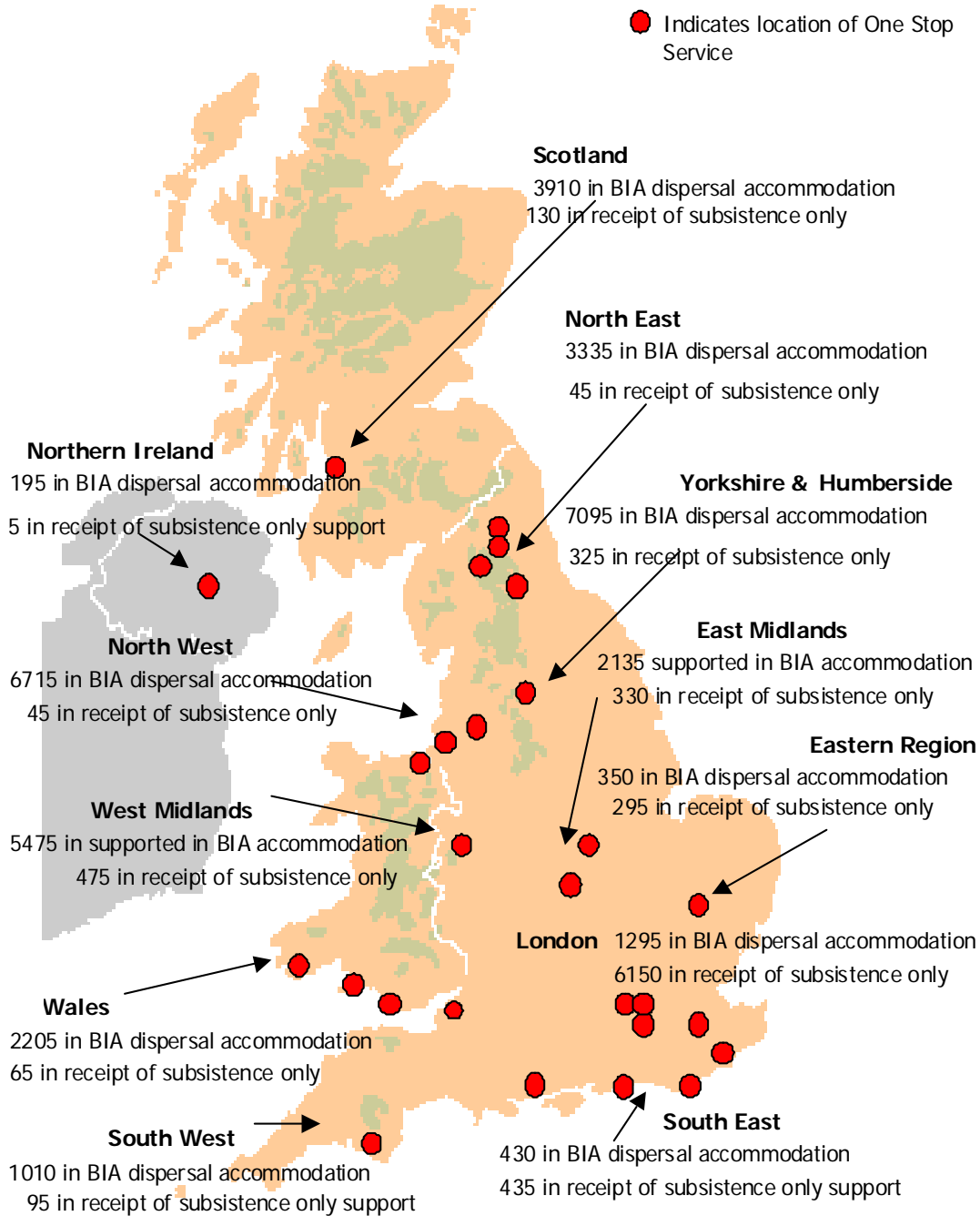


**MIGRANT  
HELPLINE**



**Number of asylum seekers in BIA dispersal accommodation  
Number of asylum seekers in receipt of subsistence only support  
as at the end of December 2007**

Total number of asylum seekers in BIA dispersal accommodation – 34,150  
Total number of asylum seekers in receipt of subsistence only support – 8,900  
Total number of asylum seekers supported by BIA– 43,050



10 areas with most asylum seekers receiving accommodation & subsistence		10 areas with most asylum seekers receiving subsistence only		10 areas with most asylum seekers receiving subsistence only (excl. London)	
Glasgow	3905	Newham	610	Birmingham	235
Birmingham	1960	Ealing	465	Manchester	205
Leeds	1760	Haringey	405	Leicester	145
Manchester	1310	Enfield	365	Leeds	110
Newcastle	1245	Redbridge	330	Coventry	90
Cardiff	1110	Brent	325	Nottingham	80
Liverpool	1010	Waltham Forest	325	Luton	80
Nottingham	1000	Hounslow	260	Liverpool	80
Sheffield	990	Lambeth	255	Slough	65
Salford	910	Lewisham	255	Glasgow	60

### **BIA to review Iraqi Section 4 cases**

BIA are shortly to write to Iraqi nationals who were granted Section 4 support on the basis of no viable route of return. The Secretary of state now considers that travel to Iraq from the UK, so now possible and reasonable. Therefore Iraqi nationals granted support under this criterion will no longer be entitled to support.

The Home Office now require Iraqi's who have been granted Section 4 Support on the basis of no viable route of return, to demonstrate that they are taking all reasonable steps to leave the UK, or that they are placing themselves into a position in which they are able to do so.

Iraqi's are required to respond to the letter in writing, in the response they must confirm that they have registered for an assisted voluntary return to Iraq or that they have already arranged or are in the process of arranging their own return to Iraq (along with supporting evidence), or that they are eligible for continued accommodation under Section 4 (including details and evidence that this is the case). BIA require individuals to respond to their letters within 21day (plus 2 days for posting)

Failure to respond within 21 days or with the required evidence will result in BIA discontinuing support (with right of appeal). If individuals fail to leave BIA may enforce their removal.

### **Children's Society study – living on the edge of despair: destitution among asylum seeking and refugee children**

'Living on the edge of despair' is a small study by the Children's Society, released on the 12<sup>th</sup> February. The Children's Society interviewed 13 destitute families and young people and collected eight case studies from other voluntary and statutory organisations.

Lisa Nandy, policy advisor for The Children's Society said: "This may be a small-scale study but the results are shocking ...If the findings of this study reflect the wider experience of asylum-seeking families in the UK then thousands of children are experiencing destitution. Regardless of their legal status these are children, entitled to better childhoods and we have a duty to protect and support them as we do all other children in the UK."

To view the full report, please follow this link - [http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/resources/documents/Research/Living\\_on\\_the\\_edge\\_of\\_despair\\_destitution\\_amongst\\_asylum\\_seeking\\_and\\_refugee\\_children\\_6114\\_full.pdf](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/resources/documents/Research/Living_on_the_edge_of_despair_destitution_amongst_asylum_seeking_and_refugee_children_6114_full.pdf)

### **Forthcoming ASP Monitoring**

In response to the growing concerns about dispersal accommodation, the Asylum Support Partnership Team and IAP agencies are collating case studies, including photographs, in order to produce a national picture of the problems.

This research focuses on two points:

- The security and quality of accommodation– this would look at how far accommodation is meeting the requirements of BIA Target Contracts for accommodation providers, the local requirements set by local authority Environmental Health Departments and legal requirements.  
It would also assess security and quality in terms of how far it is appropriate for the particular needs of the asylum seekers who are resident there (e.g. young children).
- Whether the complaints handling procedures are sufficiently robust – this would look at the chain of events between a problem being identified and it being resolved.

### **Migrant Helpline**

#### **Alternative to Detention (A2D) Pilot**

At present there are 3 families participating in the 'Alternative to Detention' Pilot in Millbank, Ashford. At the end of the month Millbank will cease to provide Initial Accommodation and the centre will be solely used for the A2D project.

The referral process for the A2D project has now been updated, so that prospective A2D families will be given 14 days rather than 7 to make arrangements to move to the project in Ashford.

#### **Address Change**

From April 2008 the Migrant Helpline Office will no longer be located at the Eastern Docks. Their new address is:  
Charlton House  
Dour Street  
Dover  
CT16 1AT

## BIA NEWS

### **Immigration Points System goes live**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008, BIA introduced a new points based immigration system. The key elements of the system are:

- it combines more than 80 pre-existing work and study routes in to the United Kingdom into five tiers;
- points are awarded on workers' skills to reflect aptitude, experience, age and also the demand for those skills any given sector, to allow the United Kingdom to respond flexibly to changes in the labour market;
- It will enable potential migrants to assess their likelihood of making a successful application and the BIA believe it will help to reduce the number of failed applications.

The BIA's new Australian-style points system begins with new rules for highly skilled foreign nationals currently working in the UK and who want to extend their stay.

The Government has also introduced a licensing system for employers who want to recruit from overseas and bring skilled workers into the UK. No company will be granted a sponsor's licence without being approved in advance by the Border and Immigration Agency. Employers bringing in skilled workers under Tier 2 of the scheme which takes effect this autumn can now start applying for that licence.

The BIA have also increased the penalty for employees, who are employing workers illegally to a fine of £10,000 for each person illegally employed.

*Continued...*

For more information please see the BIA's website

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/newpointslive>

### **The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is responsible for Serious Complaints about against BIA Staff**

From the 25<sup>th</sup> February, the IPCC is responsible for the way serious complaints against BIA staff are handled.

The IPCC's remit only extends to BIA staff using police-like powers and serious allegations, such as assault or death, about the conduct of BIA staff in England and Wales.

The IPCC does not have the power to deal with less serious complaints relating to staff or BIA policies. These complaints should continue to be made directly to BIA to be dealt with under their complaints procedures.

For further information, please visit the IPCC's website - [www.ipcc.gov.uk](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk).

## Bulletin Board

### **Photome Trips**

Photome Trips is an exhibition of street and documentary Photographs taken by young photographers from the Refugee Council in Brixton, organised by Zoom-in Photography.

The exhibition is to run from 13-28<sup>th</sup> March 2008, in the Ritzy Cinema Foyer, Brixton, SW2.

For further information please contact [info@zoom-in.org](mailto:info@zoom-in.org) or go to [www.zoom-in.org](http://www.zoom-in.org).

**Please send articles that you would like to appear in the next edition of ASP News to:**

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