

# IAP NEWS

No 62

The newsletter for the Inter-Agency Partnership October 2006.

**Welcome to the October edition of IAP News.** This edition features: changes to section 4 support in London, changes to ESOL provision for asylum seekers, information for Bulgarian & Romanian asylum seekers, helpline for lesbian and gay asylum seekers.

## SECTION 4 SUPPORT IN GREATER LONDON

From 23rd October 2006 there will be changes to the provision of section 4 support in Greater London. At present, IND provides section 4 support in the region in which the application is made however, this means that approximately 1350 people are supported in London the majority of whom were not accommodated in the region while their asylum claim was outstanding.

### New applications

Section 4 support and accommodation will only be offered to applicants who meet the criteria for section 95 support in London. These include:

- Someone receiving treatment from the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture;
- Someone who can satisfy IND that there are exceptional circumstances justifying why accommodation should be provided in London.

A fuller list of reasons why accommodation may be provided in London is available in Policy Bulletin 31 on the IND web site.

If new applicants for section 4 support wish to be accommodated in London it is important that they include relevant supporting evidence with their application (or forward this as soon as possible to the section 4 team). Those applicants who do not wish to be accommodated in London (or who do not meet the criteria) will be offered section 4 accommodation in the region

in which they were previously accommodated under section 95. Where the applicant did not receive accommodation under section 95 then accommodation under section 4 will normally be provided in the West Midlands.

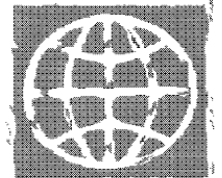
### Existing cases

Unsuccessful asylum seekers who are currently receiving section 4 support in Greater London will have their accommodation arrangements reviewed over the coming months. Those who do not meet the criteria for remaining in London will be offered alternative section 4 accommodation outside the London area. Accommodation will be offered on a no choice basis and failure to travel will result in eviction from the London accommodation.

According to IND there were 6073 supported under section 4 at the end of June 2006 (the latest period for which figures are available).

Number of people supported under Section 4	
East of England	36
London	1343
North East	327
North West	829
Scotland	189
South East	84
South West	259
Wales	279
West Midlands	1088
Yorkshire & Humber	1110
<b>Total</b>	<b>6073</b>

asylum  
support  
programme



**MIGRANT  
HELPLINE**



refugee  
**action**



refugee  
arrivals project



**REFUGEE  
COUNCIL**



scottish  
refugee  
council



Welsh Refugee Council

## BULGARIA AND ROMANIAN ASYLUM SEEKERS FOLLOWING EU ACCESSION

Bulgaria and Romania will become EU member states on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. This will have implications for any Bulgarian and Romanian asylum seekers receiving NASS support as under schedule 3 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 they will no longer be eligible for NASS support, unless the removal of support risks breaching their Human Rights.

The Asylum Resources Directorate (ARD - formerly NASS) will be writing to all Bulgarians and Romanians currently receiving NASS support advising them of this and recommending that they find alternative means of support or return home. They will also be advised to seek advice and support at their local One Stop Service. The ARD estimates that around 80 main claimants will be affected by this; many of them have large families and according to ARD, most are appeal rights exhausted.

The Home Secretary also this week announced restrictions on the right to work of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals once they enter the EU.

More information on these restrictions can be found on the Home Office web site at:

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/newsarchive/controlledaccessstouklabourmarket>

## NEW RESIDENCE PERMIT REGULATIONS – PHOTOGRAPH REQUIRED

### Background

In the past UK Residence Permits (or vignettes) have, where necessary, been issued to applicants who have not supplied a photograph. However, in order for the UK to comply with EC Regulation 1030/2002 from October 2006 all residence permits must include a photograph.

### What this means for asylum seekers?

This means that asylum applicants **must** supply the Home Office with photos as requested during the asylum process (either at the SEF stage or at the asylum interview etc). This is in addition to the photo taken at the ASU and supplied as part of the NASS1 application. If photographs are not supplied as requested, a residence permit will not be issued, which will have implications for the applicant's ability to access mainstream benefits.

## CHANGES TO EDUCATION FUNDING IN 2007/8

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) announced changes in its funding and priorities for 2007/08. The most significant changes for asylum seekers are

- ◆ there will be no LSC funding for supported asylum seekers aged 19+ to study Further Education courses (although supported asylum seekers aged 16-18 will continue to be eligible).
- ◆ ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes will no longer be free, except to the unemployed and those learners in receipt on benefits (including those with refugee status, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave).

Funding for the current year (06/07) remains unchanged and supported asylum seekers remain eligible for LSC funding up to level 3. However in the academic year 2007/08, colleges will classify all asylum seekers as international students (although they will have the discretion to charge asylum seekers as home students or waive fees altogether).

This change has come as part of a Government review and is driven by ambitions for the New Asylum Model.

This policy change raises three main areas of concern for those working with refugees and asylum seekers.

- ◆ Maintaining a policy of dispersal without supporting people to learn English is irresponsible and will have pernicious effects on social inclusion, community cohesion, personal health and well being
- ◆ Preventing access to mainstream ESOL provision for asylum seekers will inevitably restrict people's ability to integrate successfully as refugees
- ◆ Agencies (both mainstream and others) will end up spending far more on interpreting and other services.

Full details can be found at [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Media/PressReleases/pr388\\_annual-statement-of-priorities.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Media/PressReleases/pr388_annual-statement-of-priorities.htm)

## BULLETIN BOARD



### TRAINING FOR RCOs AVAILABLE

The Refugee Council's Community Development Team's (CDT) latest training and seminar brochure for refugee community organisations (RCOs) is now available on the Refugee Council website, please go to the link below for more information.

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/eventsandtraining/training/rco/>

From October to March 2007, the team will be delivering and hosting a great variety of seminars, workshops and training to help with RCOs' organisational development, including:

- writing better funding applications;

### HELPLINE FOR LESBIAN & GAY ASYLUM SEEKERS

The UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group (formerly the Stonewall Immigration Group) is a voluntary organisation providing information and advice on immigration rights for same sex couples and asylum seekers.

A lot of information particularly on immigration and civil partnerships is available on the web site [www.uklgig.org.uk](http://www.uklgig.org.uk)

The organisation has telephone helpline which is open on **Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday**. With the arrival of Civil Partnership legislation, there is a solution to most partnership immigration problems contained within the website. The Group is increasingly focussed on the issues facing gay and lesbian asylum seekers.

The helpline telephone number is **020 7620 6010** as follows:

- › **5pm:** general information
- › **ng office hours:** asylum queries only
- › **to 8pm:** free legal advice

### BELONGING: VOICES OF LONDON'S REFUGEES 27 OCTOBER 2006 TO 25 FEBRUARY 2007

A new exhibition revealing the experiences and contributions of refugees in the capital runs at the Museum of London until 25 February 2007.

**Belonging: voices of London's refugees** presents powerful interviews, photographs, objects, art, and film to tell the personal stories of why refugees come to London, the challenges of their new lives, the barriers they face, and the immeasurable contributions they make to the city. People from more than fifteen communities are included – from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Latin America.

Admission to the exhibition is free and it is open Monday –Saturday 10am to 5:50pm and Sundays 12 to 5:50pm. The nearest tube stations are St Paul's, Barbican and Moorgate.

See [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk) for more information and related events