

IAP NEWS

No 59

The newsletter for the Inter-Agency Partnership July 2006.

asylum
support
programme

Welcome to the July edition of IAP News. This edition features: Home Office reform, section 4 support update, introduction of section 55 interviews for people changing to subs only support, No Place for a Child campaign report, NCB web site, evaluation.

IMMIGRATION SYSTEM TO CHANGE

John Reid, the Home Secretary, has set out plans for widespread changes to the immigration system following a review.

The document is designed to build on the government's existing five-year strategy for asylum and immigration, with new proposals for strengthening borders, streamlining the asylum process and removing illegal immigrants.

Reforms will include:

- Introducing a new target for processing asylum claims with 35% granted or removed within six months by 2007 and 90% by 2011.
- Increasing removals to 3,500 per month by April 2009.
- Making more effective use of detention, tagging and monitoring of those whose asylum cases have not yet been decided.
- Introduction of biometric identity cards for foreign nationals resident in Britain from 2008.
- Introducing biometric visas and "authority to travel" schemes so airlines face penalties if they carry passengers not entitled to enter Britain.
- Putting immigration staff at airports and ports into uniform and double resources for enforcement and surveillance.

- IND will become a semi-independent agency run at arm's length from the Home Office with new performance management and service standards.
- A new electronic caseworking system will be developed and implemented by April 2009.

A new drive will be made to increase removals of failed asylum seekers and illegal migrants with a fresh attempt made to reach memorandums of understanding with countries such as Algeria about the treatment of those sent back.

The Home Secretary again ruled out calls for an asylum amnesty but promised to settle, within five years, up to 450,000 unresolved "legacy" cases, which date back to the late 1990s.

IND will be conducting a consultation exercise on its proposals. In the meantime, initial comments can be sent to:

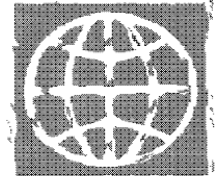
indreviewcomments@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

or to:

IND Review Comments
Immigration Nationality
Directorate
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon CR9 3RR

Read the review documents here:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/ind-review-250706>



**MIGRANT
HELPLINE**



**refugee.
action**



**refugee
arrivals project**



**REFUGEE
COUNCIL**



SECTION 4 SUPPORT

All asylum seekers whose applications have been refused and whose appeal rights are exhausted are required to leave the UK. The Government accepts that there will be some failed asylum seekers who are destitute and unable to leave the UK immediately due to circumstances beyond their control. In these circumstances failed asylum seeker can request the provision of support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA 1999).

Families with minor dependants under 18, who were in receipt of asylum support under section 95 of the IAA 1999 at the time their appeal rights were exhausted, continue to receive support in accordance with section 94(5) of the IAA 1999. Where the first minor dependant arrives after appeal rights are exhausted, support may be available under section 4. This is why there are a number of heavily pregnant women or women with newborn babies on section 4 support.

NASS regards section 4 support as a limited and temporary form of support for people who are expected to leave the UK. Section 4 support is provided only under strict criteria:

- his/her claim for asylum has been determined and there are no more appeal rights;
- s/he has exhausted any outstanding application under Article 3 of the Human Rights Act;
- s/he has been supported by NASS or under the Interim Arrangements;
- s/he is destitute; and
- s/he has no other avenues of support.
- s/he must be unable to leave the UK due to a physical impediment to travel (illness or late pregnancy); or
- s/he must be unable to return to the country of origin because a safe route has not yet been identified; or
- the circumstances of his/her case are exceptional, and s/he is taking all reasonable steps to leave the UK whilst complying with efforts to be removed; or
- it is clear that s/he has been granted permission for judicial review, or has made an application for permission to apply for judicial review and the Secretary of State deems the application warrants consideration.

Support is provided in the form of self-catering accommodation with vouchers to the value of £35 per week to purchase food and essential toiletries. In some cases, full-board accommodation may be provided depending on availability. NASS maintains that the legislation does not allow cash to be provided.

It is important to remember that there is now a right of appeal to the Asylum Support Adjudicator against any refusal of section 4 support made after 31 March 2005.

The latest figures available show there were 5,435 applicants, excluding dependants, supported under section 4 at the end of March 2006.

Top 10 nationalities granted S4 support – Q4 2005	
Iraq	235
Iran	120
Eritrea	105
Somalia	55
Sudan	50
Congo	45
Ethiopia	45
DR Congo	40
Afghanistan	40
Zimbabwe	35
Other nationalities	190
Total	960

Completed application forms should be sent to:
 Section 4
 9th Floor East
 Whitgift Block B
 15 Wellesley Road
 Croydon CR0 1AT
 or faxed directly to 020 8604 6908 / 6777.

Download the section 4 policy bulletin here:
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/12358/pb71.pdf>

Download the section 4 application form here:
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/12358/newrequestsection4support.pdf>

Download a guide showing which shops accept which vouchers in each location.
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/12358/outletswherevoucherscanbeus1.xls>

For all other queries on section 4, please email:
Queries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or call:
 020 8604 6910/6912/6904/6902.

NASS NEWS

CHANGING TO SUBSISTENCE ONLY SUPPORT – LATE APPLICANTS SUBJECT TO SECTION 55

From 10 July 2006, asylum applicants who are receiving accommodation and support from NASS but who later decide to switch to subsistence only support will be asked to attend a section 55 interview. This will only apply to 'late applicants' i.e. those that made their asylum claim after being in the country for more than three days.

Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 says that asylum seekers will be ineligible for any form of support if they did not apply for asylum "as soon as reasonably practicable".

This is because NASS deems that claimants who apply for subsistence only support will normally have alternative accommodation available to them and therefore it is unlikely that support will be required to avoid a breach of Article 3. However, NASS will not refuse support under section 55 without first offering the opportunity of a section 55 interview. Late claimants, who switch from accommodation and subsistence to subsistence only, will be interviewed in line with the policy.

NASS will not pay travel expenses for attending these interviews. If the asylum applicant is subject to NAM and is living in a NAM area (Croydon, Liverpool, Leeds or Solihull) they will be invited to interview by their NAM caseworker. If the asylum applicant is not resident in a NAM area then they will be invited to interview in Croydon. If the asylum applicant can demonstrate that they do not have the funds to travel to Croydon then a member of the Croydon team may travel to the regional office nearest to the applicant and conduct the interview there.

The table below shows the number of individuals invited to a section 55 interview by NASS region for April, May and June 2006.

	Invited to S55 interview	Attended S55 interview	% attended	Granted support	% of those interviewed	% of those invited
London	229	133	58.1%	32	24.1%	14.0%
Scotland	8	2	25.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
South Central & East	65	33	50.8%	3	9.1%	4.6%
North East	5	3	60.0%	1	33.3%	20.0%
Yorks & Humberside	31	9	29.0%	4	44.4%	12.9%
Wales	2	1	50.0%	1	100.0%	50.0%
West Midlands	50	13	26.0%	4	30.8%	8.0%
East Midlands	27	11	40.7%	1	9.1%	3.7%
South West	10	2	20.0%	1	50.0%	10.0%
North West	29	5	17.2%	2	40.0%	6.9%
East of England	18	6	33.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Northern Ireland	4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%

...STOP PRESS... COUNTERSIGNING TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In IAP News 57, we reported that IND would accept countersignatures for travel documents from people who are OISC Level 1 accredited. We were informed this policy would be introduced in May. Since that time we have been informed that this has been delayed and will be introduced at the end of July at the earliest. IAP News will keep you informed about this issue but, in the meantime, we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

RESOURCES

NO PLACE FOR A CHILD - CAMPAIGN REPORT

The No Place for a Child campaign has released a report co-written by a Labour peer and two opposition MPs which highlights concerns over children in detention.

The report, by John Bercow MP, Lord Dubs and Evan Harris MP, and supported by the No Place for a Child campaign, condemns the increase in the use of detention over the last five years, and the fact that as many as 2000 children are detained every year. The report will also highlight the growing concerns over the psychological and physical impact of detention on children.

Read the report at:

<http://www.noplaceforachild.org/alternatives.htm>

CITIZEN'S ADVICE REPORT - SECTION 4 SUPPORT

This report sets out evidence of the poor service delivery by NASS in 2005, as well as other problems with the cashless section 4 regime and the associated negative impact on other public services, including the NHS. It argues that the evolution of the regime since 2000 now demands appropriate reform of associated policy and practice.

The report recommends how such reform can be incorporated into the Home Office's New Asylum Model - the most radical redesign of its asylum processes in more than two decades.

Download a copy of the report here:

http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/shaming_destitution.pdf

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU WEB SITE SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN

NCB has launched a web site to develop good practice in supporting asylum seeking and refugee children funded by the Department for Education and Skills. The site will provide access to information and practical tools, to help children and young people plan for the future.

It offers a wide range of materials on key issues in the field including:

- examples of good practice
- project briefings
- academic papers
- resources directory
- training courses
- current research

Access the web site at:

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?sve=881>

DESTITUTION AMONGST ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE UK

ICAR (Information Centre about asylum and refugees in the UK) has released a new briefing on destitution. The briefing will continue to be updated and includes information on:

- Destitution statistics
- Causes and effects of destitution
- Organisations and resources for those experiencing destitution.

Download the briefing here:

<http://www.icar.org.uk/?lid=6575>

NEW PUBLICATION - REFUGEE CHILDREN IN THE UK

Refugee Children in the UK by Jill Rutter contains a large amount of information which will be useful reading for professionals, academics, students and people whose work involves meeting the needs of refugee children.

The following themes are included in the book: a background to refugee populations in the UK; a critique of labelling and the concept of the 'traumatised' child refugee; the UK's past and present policies in relation to refugees; views of young British people on asylum and migration; the effects of educational policy and practice on the success of refugee children; case studies of Congolese, Somali and Sudanese communities; new visions for the long-term educational success of refugee children.

Refugee Children in the UK is published by the Open University Press and costs £19.99.

ASYLUM PRINCIPLES: A STATEMENT FOR CHURCHES WORKING ON ASYLUM ISSUES

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) has produced a document entitled *Asylum Principles: a Statement for Churches Working on Asylum Issues*.

The group recognises the duty of churches to help those facing social alienation and hardship.

In light of the changes in public policy on asylum over the past ten years, the organisation has produced the Statement of Principles, which is designed to "help Churches individually and collectively to formulate their responses to public policy and its impact upon people who seek asylum and refugees" and to create a framework for the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) to carry forward its work.

Download a copy of the report here:

http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf/Asylum_Principles.pdf

IAP NEWS

The newsletter for the Inter-Agency Partnership.

YOUR CHANCE TO GIVE US FEEDBACK

The Inter Agency Co-ordination Team has been publishing IAP NEWS for almost six years. The aim of the newsletter is to give readers information about NASS, its policies, and how they operate in practice. Now we would like to hear from you...

Please take a few minutes to fill out our evaluation form. Answer as many questions as you feel able to and tick the boxes which apply.

In order to make IAP NEWS as useful a resource as possible – we need your feedback. The results of all the forms we receive will be collated and taken into consideration when producing future copies of the newsletter.

How often do you read IAP News?

Every month Every other month Not that often Never read it before

Do you think articles in IAP News are:

Easy to understand Reasonably clear Not always clear Not easy to understand

Do you find the articles in IAP News useful?

Very useful Quite useful Sometimes useful Rarely useful

How often do you refer to IAP News in your day to day work?

Once a month Once a week Daily Never

What kind of articles are you most interested in? (please tick as many as apply)

Updates on NASS policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Updates on general asylum / immigration policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Updates on IAP issues and campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ideas for sharing best practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum / dispersal statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summaries and links to reports and research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bulletin boards – job adverts / conferences etc	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you think IAP News should be:

Quarterly Bi-monthly Monthly (as at present) Fortnightly

Please return this form to:

The Administrator, Inter Agency Co-ordination Team, The Refugee Council, 240 – 250 Ferndale Road, Brixton, London SW9 8BB
Or email the completed form to: ICT@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Please return this form by: Friday 1 September 2006

Do you receive IAP News by:

Post Email

If by post, would you be able to receive IAP News by email in future and help us reduce our printing and distribution costs?

Email address:

How many people read your copy of IAP News? approx.

Why do you subscribe to IAP NEWS?

- I work for one of the six Partnership agencies
- I work for a Refugee Community Organisation
- I work for a Local Authority
- I work for a solicitor's firm
- I work for a voluntary / community group
- I am a student looking at asylum / immigration issues
- I am interested in asylum / immigration issues

What other sources do you use for information about NASS? (please tick as many as apply)

- Refugee Council email newsletter / website
- Other Partnership agency (which one?)
- ICT information bulletins / policy briefings
- RCO News
- Home Office / NASS web site
- Newspapers / television
- Other (please tell us)

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Please give any other comments you may have about IAP NEWS

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Please return this form to:

The Administrator, Inter Agency Co-ordination Team, The Refugee Council, 240 – 250 Ferndale Road, Brixton, London SW9 8BB

Or email the completed form to: ICT@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Please return this form by: Friday 1 September 2006