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Breakthrough Britain

# Asylum Matters

*Restoring Trust in the UK Asylum System*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This is the Executive Summary of the Centre for Social Justice Asylum and Destitution working group's report *Asylum Matters: Restoring Trust in the UK Asylum System*. For further information or to download the full report please visit [www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)**

### 1. Introduction

Over the last ten years the asylum system has suffered from a catastrophic breakdown of trust from all sides in the aftermath of a sharp rise and then fall in the numbers of people applying for asylum in the UK. The Government has legislated aggressively over this period in order to reduce the numbers entering the UK to claim asylum. This has made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers to make applications as well as have their cases properly heard. Many asylum seekers have lost trust in the system's ability to deliver a fair hearing, mainly because of inadequate legal support, a lack of accurate translation and poor quality decision-making. The system fails to encourage or force repatriation quickly enough for refused asylum seekers, and meanwhile they are driven underground into destitution and illegality.

The public has also lost confidence in the system and believes that it is too open to abuse; yet has very little understanding of the issues. Asylum is increasingly confused with the overall debate about immigration when in fact they are very different issues: asylum applications accounted for only four per cent of the total UK immigration figure in 2007.<sup>2</sup> Sensationalising of the asylum issue by media and politicians has further contributed to the breakdown of trust and has led to a polarisation of views, which makes balanced and informed debate almost impossible. This in turn has brought forth increasingly restrictive policies from the Government.



“The asylum system has developed into a process that is more about controlling numbers than deciding who needs protection.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Chris McDowell, former Director of Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees.

2 Office of National Statistics (2008) 'News Release: Emigration of British citizens fell in 2007'. National Statistics; Home Office RDS (2008) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2007*. Home Office.

“In 1980, the number of asylum seekers applying for refugee status in the UK was relatively low at 2,352. However in the early 1990s there were significant increases in the numbers of people applying for asylum, which peaked in 2002 at 103,080 applicants (including dependants). Since 2002 numbers of applications have steadily reduced to 23,430 (principal applicants) new claims for asylum in 2007.”<sup>3</sup>

The Asylum and Destitution working group spent a year taking evidence from statutory, private and voluntary sector stakeholders in the asylum system, migration experts, and asylum seekers and refugees themselves. We visited asylum programmes in Canada and Australia, and consulted with European experts. Our recommendations draw strength from this wide consultation. They aim to restore trust in the system by making it more efficient, humane and fair.

## 2. Culture of disbelief

The Home Office has made strenuous efforts over the last few years to improve the way that the process is administered and some significant improvements have been made. However, there is often a large gap in policy (or aspiration) and practice on the ground resulting in many ‘perverse and unjust decisions’<sup>4</sup> to refuse asylum to those that need it.

“Having acted as an expert witness over many years in planning appeals I have frequently been appalled [in contrast] by my experience when supporting asylum seekers through their appeal process. Frequently little weight was given to my testimony based on a personal knowledge of the appellant gained over months and sometimes years.”

Adrian Smith MRICS, Newcastle, in evidence to the CSJ

The recent Independent Asylum Commission report identified a ‘culture of disbelief’ that pervades so much of the policy and decision making of the last decade, which has made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers to receive a fair hearing. In addition to this mistrust, many other factors prejudice an asylum seekers’ fair hearing. Severe cuts in legal aid funding have forced many asylum seekers to represent themselves at tribunals (often without an interpreter). Great concern has been expressed by many organisations (such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR]) about the poor quality of interpretation, a subjective approach to the appellant’s credibility, out-of-date or inaccurate Country of Origin information, poorly justified dismissal of evidence given by expert witnesses in support of asylum seekers and the pressure that politically motivated targets have placed on decision makers.

This has contributed to many poor decisions resulting in only three per cent of asylum applications being granted refugee status in 2004.<sup>5</sup> 89 per cent of initial decisions were appealed in 2007,<sup>6</sup> and 23 per cent of initial refusals were overturned in 2007 (though it was as

3 Migration Policy Institute, *Country and comparative data*; Home Office RDS (2008) ‘Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2007’.

4 The Independent Asylum Commission (2008) *Fit for purpose yet?: The Independent Asylum Commission’s Interim Findings*. IAC.

5 This excludes people granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) and Discretionary Leave (DL).

6 16,755 asylum applications refused 2007, 14,935 asylum appeals determined. Home Office RDS (2008) *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2007*. Home Office.

high as 27 per cent in 1999). This appeal rate is extremely high when compared to other judicial processes, and countries like Canada have less than one per cent of their asylum appeals upheld.<sup>7</sup> This is a waste of taxpayers' money, and has undermined confidence in the whole system; with many asylum seekers having to wait years in limbo for a decision on their case. This systematic failure has led to a huge backlog of up to 450,000 asylum cases<sup>8</sup> that it is estimated will take between 10-18 years to resolve<sup>9</sup> through repatriation or granting leave to remain.

### 3. Irrational policy making

Considerable efforts have been made to reduce the perceived incentives to come to the UK to claim asylum (often referred to as the 'pull factors'), so that fewer unmeritorious applicants arrive here in the first place. However, there is no simplistic relation between conditions of support in the UK and the decision to seek asylum here;<sup>10</sup> and the increasingly tight controls of our borders are a blunt instrument to control numbers of asylum seekers, indiscriminately making it harder for the genuine cases as well. Research commissioned by the Home Office<sup>11</sup> as to why people chose the UK to claim asylum, points to colonial links, family ties and a belief in Britain having a fair judicial system as the main motivators for choosing the UK to claim asylum (when a choice is possible), rather than any knowledge of the welfare system or employment opportunities. Despite this, misguided attempts to reduce apparent incentives for asylum applicants have resulted in policy withholding access to vital services, such as secondary healthcare, from refused asylum seekers.

Though the causes of the fluctuation in numbers of applicants to the UK over the past 10 years are intertwined and complex, it is clear that they are mainly *global*. There is a correlation between the highest numbers of applicants and countries that are war torn or under political oppression. For example, the top four nationalities seeking asylum in 2002 were from Iraq (under Saddam Hussein), Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Somalia.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the phenomenon was not peculiar to the UK. The graph overleaf demonstrates that it was actually part of a global trend in the asylum seeking population, which peaked in 2002 before declining steadily from then on.

This surely dispels the myth that UK domestic 'pull factors' are the main reasons for people coming to the UK, or that creating a harsher experience has had much effect the other way. Nonetheless the myth persists and is perpetuated - at the 2003 Labour Party conference Tony Blair claimed: 'We have cut asylum applications by a half.'<sup>13</sup>



7 Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, *2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report*, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.

8 UK Border Agency, 'What are the older cases?' <<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/process/oldercases/whatareoldercases>> [Accessed 20/10/08].

9 House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (27 February 2006) 'Returning failed asylum applicants'.

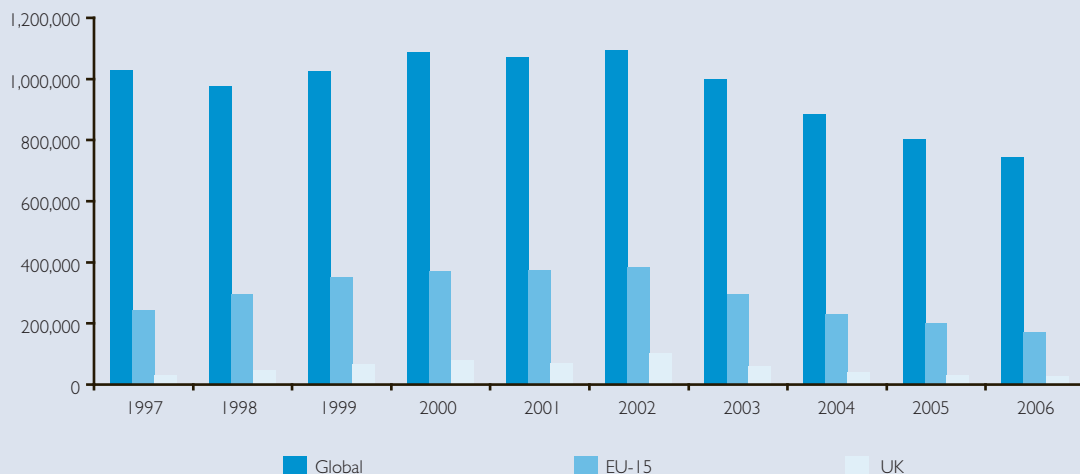
10 Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (2007) *Moving on: from destitution to contribution*. JRCT.

11 Robinson V et al (2002). *Understanding the decision making of asylum seekers*. Home Office.

12 Home Office (2002) 'Immigration and Asylum Statistics'. <<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration-asylum-publications.html>> [Accessed 15/02/08].

13 Tony Blair's speech at the Labour Party Conference, *The Guardian* 30 September 2003.

Figure 1: Asylum applications 1997-2006



Source: UNHCR and Eurostat

Many other countries have also experienced a similar rise in asylum applications yet have coped with the challenges that this brings much better than we have in the UK. For example Sweden was receiving approximately 80,000 Bosnian refugees every year in the early 1990s. Yet despite these large numbers there has been little public outcry and an overall positive portrayal of asylum seekers in the Swedish media. This is not to say that Sweden is a ‘soft touch’ country in regard to detention and deportation issues: it has the highest level of returns in Europe at over 80 per cent of all asylum refusals.<sup>14</sup> The key to the success of Sweden’s integrated approach is a recognition that asylum seekers cannot be bureaucratically controlled, resulting in a flexible and compassionate system based on informing and empowering the asylum seeker.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. Lack of support, engagement and return leading to destitution

Our greatest concern with the current UK asylum system relates to the way that accommodation and financial support is withdrawn almost immediately after a negative decision has been made on an asylum claim. Despite there being some statutory support offered, most asylum seekers in this situation choose to go underground into a world of illegal work, prostitution and destitution rather than accept the support offered with the conditions of voluntary return attached. The number of destitute refused asylum seekers is not clear; however the British Red Cross estimates that at least 26,000 destitute asylum seekers are living on Red Cross food parcels in the UK.<sup>16</sup>

“The life I live, I find myself depressed, abandoned, alone, a nothing.”

27 year old woman from Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>17</sup>

14 Mitchell G (2001) *Asylum Seekers in Sweden: An integrated approach to reception, detention, determination, integration and return*. Australian Fabians.  
 15 Ibid.  
 16 *The Guardian* (11 January 2005) ‘How many work illegally in UK? It’s not easy to find out.’  
 17 Refugee Action (2006) *Destitution Trap*. Refugee Action.

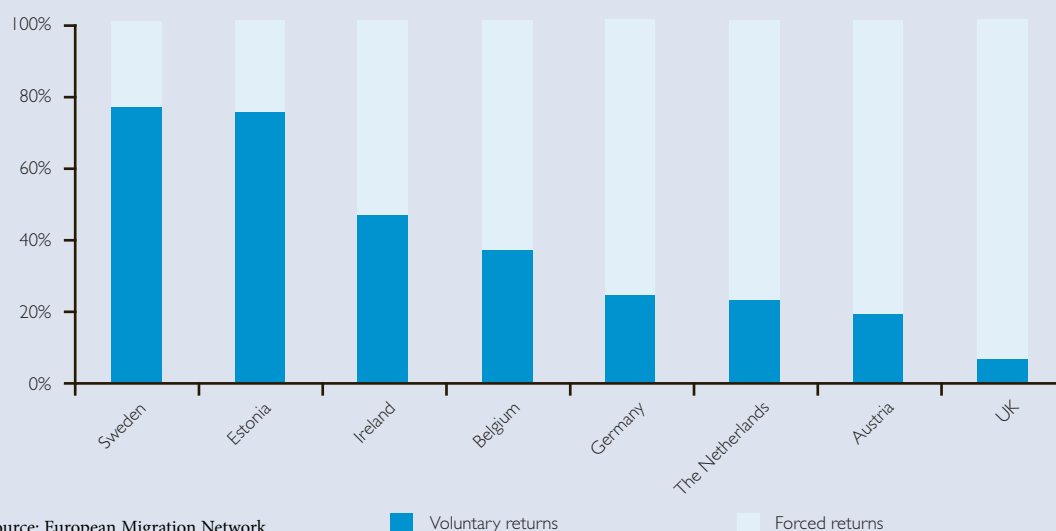
Not only is this utterly inhumane, it is also counterproductive as it does not give any time to work with individuals to try and overcome their concerns about returning home (if given a negative decision), or to properly integrate them into the British system (if given a positive decision on their asylum claim). It is unrealistic to expect asylum seekers to make what they may consider to be a life or death decision about whether to return home or not, when their most immediate and pressing concerns are more to do with immediate survival rather than planning their longer term future.

“The policy of enforced destitution shows that our asylum system is deeply flawed, treats vulnerable people in an inhumane way and brings shame on the UK.”

Donna Covey CEO, Refugee Council

If the withdrawal of support were intended to encourage asylum seekers to return to their home country (as the Home Office argues) then it is simply not working. The take-up of voluntary return is small. Of those who were repatriated in 2007, 2,865 (21 per cent) left voluntarily; but this must be seen in the context of 283,000 ‘failed’ asylum seekers who remain in the UK. By contrast, 82 per cent of all returns of asylum seekers from Sweden in 2008 were voluntary. This is not a case of ‘Swedish exceptionalism’, as the principles of engagement and cooperation which underpin its system have been replicated with similar results in Anglophone countries: for example, Hotham Mission’s Asylum Seeker Project in Melbourne, Australia and the Failed Refugee Project in Toronto, Canada have both seen more than 80 per cent voluntary returns. Our lack of success in persuading refused asylum seekers to leave is part of a broader policy failure: Figure 2 shows that the proportion of all ‘return migrants’ (including refused asylum seekers) who return voluntarily from the UK is very small (six per cent) compared to other European countries.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 2: Forced and voluntary returns in Europe 2005 (all return migrants)



18 European Migration Network Synthesis Report (2007) *Return Migration*. EMN. Table 1. The report defines ‘Return migrants’ as ‘a heterogeneous group that includes inter alia failed asylum seekers, migrants protected under temporary schemes, refugees after the termination of their asylum status, illegal immigrants, migrants with an expired temporary work permit, and legal migrants who wish to return to their country of origin.’

“Teesside’s most senior judge delivered a series of criticisms as he freed a failed asylum seeker stuck ‘in limbo’. Judge Peter Fox told him, ‘The Government has taken a decision, I am informed, not to take any step to remove you from this country, and yet to not approve your remaining. Such a state of limbo is highly unsatisfactory from everyone’s point of view, including of course, yours.’”<sup>19</sup>

Making someone homeless also makes removing them forcibly much more problematic and expensive, with a forced removal costing on average ten times more than a voluntary return (£1,100 compared to £11,000).<sup>20</sup> The issue of facilitating removals is complex and sensitive. The number of removals of refused asylum seekers is very

“Destitution – it sounds as if people have been put in the bin and are scavenging. It makes me sound like an animal. Perhaps that’s all I am now. All that I am.”

67 year old woman from Zimbabwe, *Destitution Trap*, Refugee Action

low, and the process very slow: a study published in 2005 found only three per cent being removed within three months of a decision, with an average removal taking place 403 days after the applicant’s appeal had been completed.<sup>21</sup> This has undermined the credibility of the process by giving the impression that there are only distant consequences to a negative decision. This encourages refused asylum seekers to postpone a decision to leave voluntarily and instead to try find illegal work while they are unofficially able to stay in the UK.

There is little meaningful engagement by the UK Border Agency at the end of the process and very little is being done to try and address the fears that asylum seekers have about returning home. Instead, the UKBA takes a very confrontational approach that forces the two parties further apart and decreases the likelihood of any agreement on how to resolve issues. This creates a ‘limbo’ situation where thousands of asylum seekers with claims pending or refused remain in the UK for what can often be several years.

## 5. Support from the voluntary sector

Invariably the voluntary and faith sectors have stepped into the gap providing a life-line to the most vulnerable of these individuals. Their compassion, professionalism and dedication to the plight of asylum seekers has saved many asylum seekers from starvation, serious illness or suicide. However they are unable to gain any statutory funding to support refused asylum seekers, leaving many organisations stretched to breaking point.

Asylum seekers are not entitled to paid employment (unless their initial decision has taken longer than a year). This is not only immensely damaging to an individual’s mental health but is also de-skilling very motivated and qualified workers who could be making a contribution to the UK economy and paying their own way, rather than the state funding their support while they are having their claim for asylum assessed.

## 6. Developing a new asylum system

To ignore the complex challenges at the end of the process creates problems of huge proportions not only for the asylum seekers themselves, but for the country as a whole. Social tensions are already strained due to the wider

19 *The Middlesbrough Evening Gazette* 9 June 2008.

20 UK National Audit Office (2005). *Returning Failed asylum applicants*. The Stationary Office.

21 *Ibid.*

inflamed immigration debate. Policies which expand the underground world of illegal work, prostitution, and destitution will do nothing to ease these tensions. There have to be clear consequences at the end of the asylum process but the Home Office is falling behind its own targets for removing those that have not been recognised as refugees. They also seem to be in denial about why so many choose not to accept the support they offer, washing their hands of the plight of some of the most marginalised and victimised people in our country today.

In order to tackle the issue of destitution at the end of the asylum process, this report has looked at the wider causes of that destitution and has made recommendations that affect the way decisions are made about asylum claims. We recognise that asylum is a hugely complex and demanding issue to get right and would like to acknowledge the challenges of the role that ministers and the UK Border agency have to play in administering the system and making decisions about asylum claimants.



Our purpose is not simply to criticise the Home Office or UKBA, but rather to tackle some of the major shortcomings that have been brought to our attention by stakeholders at all stages of the system, and make constructive proposals on how it can be improved. A balanced debate is required based on the facts rather than tabloid-propagated myths, with a restrained use of language that does not seek to sensationalise and use the issue for political gain. However, we are convinced that radical change to restore trust in UK asylum system is possible, so that UK citizens can once again be proud of our heritage of protecting some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

## 7. Recommendations to restore trust in the asylum system

### 7.1 DIVIDE THE CURRENT ROLES OF THE UK BORDER AGENCY INTO THREE SEPARATE BODIES/FUNCTIONS.

One of the key problems with the current system is that the UKBA manages the whole system. It enforces border controls, oversees the support to asylum seekers as they go through the system and makes the decision in the first instance about who to accept as a refugee. In short UKBA tries to combine the task of enforcer, supporter and decision maker while also administering the whole system. This makes for some unhelpful conflicts of interest, particularly when making the decision about the applicant's claim for asylum and also at the end of the process when managing integration, return or removal.

Therefore, we propose dividing up the asylum system to ensure that different stakeholders operate within the overall process and focus on their specific role while being accountable to an independent body. In outline this division would be:

- **UK Border Agency** – Enforcement
- **Independent Body** – Decision making
- **Contracted Support Agency** – Support

For further details on the roles of the above agencies see Chapter 7 of the main report.

The following recommendations should be implemented by the above agencies.

**7.2 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF DECISIONS ON WHO NEEDS TO BE GIVEN ASYLUM.**

Improving the quality of decisions on asylum applications is essential to restoring trust in the asylum system. Making every effort to get the decision right first time is in everyone’s interest. It speeds up the process, reducing the number of appeals being made and the associated costs. It also makes it easier to work with asylum seekers who have been refused as they are more willing to consider returning home if they feel that they have had a fair hearing. Until the quality of decisions is improved, recommendations 7.4 and 7.5 (concerning voluntary and forcible repatriation) should not be implemented.

Improving the quality of decisions can be achieved by implementing the following measures:

**7.2.1 Create an independent body of highly trained magistrates to make asylum decisions.**

The working group has been very impressed with the Canadian asylum system where asylum decisions are made by independent ‘members’ (magistrates) and so our proposal is an adaptation of this model. A panel of three magistrates is required that would be full time and paid, undertaking similar training to current magistrates but focusing on asylum issues. These decisions would still be monitored externally so that their quality and consistency could be assessed and the findings made public.



*Julian Prior and Bob Holman meeting the Immigration Minister, Robert Orr at the Canadian High Commission, London*

These decisions would still be monitored externally so that their quality and consistency could be assessed and the findings made public.

Making a decision on an asylum claim is extremely complex and demanding and requires exceptional judgement based on experience and training. Therefore, we recommend that asylum decision makers are people with some experience of life and who are motivated by the challenges of the job.

**7.2.2 Make the asylum hearing inquisitorial and not adversarial.**

This is a fundamentally different way of looking at the evidence submitted for scrutiny for an asylum claim. By making the hearing inquisitorial the magistrate is more pro-actively engaged in asking questions of the appellant and witnesses and agreement can quickly be reached with other parties on which aspects of the case are in question, enabling the majority of time to be devoted to those issues that require the greatest level of examination to determine the outcome of the case.

**7.2.3 Increase the availability of legal support at the earliest opportunity and throughout the process.**

Legal advice is crucial to ensure a fair hearing during the decision-making process. Evidence from the Early Legal Advice Pilot in Solihull points to the way that more sustainable decisions are made when legal advice is more readily available saving a costly appeal process (50 per cent fewer decisions were appealed than in the control area of Leeds). The Early Legal Advice Pilot also recorded an increase in the percentage of positive decisions to 58 per cent compared to 29.5 per cent in the control area of Leeds, the highest completion rate for cases and the lowest absconding rate in the country.<sup>22</sup> We recommend that the principles and best practice learned in the Solihull pilot be adopted as the model for access to legal support throughout the UK.

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22 Findings presented by Maurice Wren at Advice UK London Conference, October 2008.



**7.2.4 Provide funding for medical reports, expert country assessments and other key information.**

Currently there is little funding for pieces of supporting evidence, such as medical reports, which can influence the outcome of an asylum claim. In order for a full and fair assessment of an application we propose resources be set aside for funding such evidence.

**7.2.5 Ensure adequate time is given for thorough preparation of the case.**

It is in everyone's interest to ensure that a decision on an asylum claim is made as quickly as possible. However, proper preparation in the first place will reduce the chances that an appeal will be made on the basis of evidence that could not be gathered in time for the first consideration. Spending a little more time on the initial preparation of the first hearing will often save a lot of time (and money) in the long run.

**7.2.6 Ensure that the Country of Origin Information reports are up to date, relevant and are compiled and maintained by the independent body charged with making asylum decisions.**

This information is used to assess the current situation in asylum seekers' home countries and plays an important role in assessing the merits of asylum claims. Therefore, it is vital that this information is accurate and independent and so we recommend that it should be the responsibility of the independent body created to make asylum decisions to manage and publish this information.

**7.2.7 Invest in quality independent translation and interpretation that is objective and un-biased.**

Accurate interpretation and translation are essential for a fair assessment of many asylum seekers' claims.

**7.3 HOUSING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO BE CONTINUOUS UNTIL INTEGRATED OR RETURNED (UP TO A MAXIMUM OF SIX MONTHS IN MOST CASES)**

Immediate removal of support is inhumane and makes final resolution harder. It does not allow time for individuals to make alternative plans and encourages illegal working and destitution. Even when given a positive decision, to withdraw support within as little as seven days makes integration into the British way of life almost impossible. Making refused asylum seekers homeless and penniless is hugely counterproductive: it makes it much more difficult to work with them to encourage voluntary return or to ensure timely removal, and in driving them underground makes it harder to keep track of them. According to our research destitution is not a major factor in the decision to return voluntarily and there is no substantial evidence to suggest that continuing support would encourage more people to come to the UK to claim asylum. It is less costly and more sustainable in the long run to continue providing support for asylum seekers who have been refused the right to remain in the UK, as voluntary return (which is ten times cheaper than removal) can be more realistically considered when failed asylum seekers are not focussed on basic survival. (See recommendation 7.4 for more details on the cost neutrality of this proposal.) However, we recommend that there is a time limit for this support of up to six months by which time the individual should be integrated into regular work and social support, if given a positive decision, or have returned to their home country voluntarily or forcibly if given a negative decision. This compares with an average of thirteen and a half months before removal takes place (2005 figures).<sup>23</sup>

“Destitution is not a major factor in the decision to return voluntarily.”

23 National Audit Office (2005) *Returning Failed Asylum Applicants*, The Stationary Office London.

#### 7.4 WORK WITH REFUSED ASYLUM SEEKERS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTARY RETURN.

The support agency case worker is the best person to work with the asylum seeker to overcome barriers to voluntary return. There should be an intense period of weekly meetings to understand and address (where possible) the concerns expressed by the asylum seeker about returning home. The support worker would coordinate with other



agencies who have a role in facilitating voluntary departure, such as the International Organisation for Migration, and mental health workers, as needed. They would also be in communication with the UKBA case owner who would be working on a parallel process of conducting a risk assessment for forced removal. This carrot and stick approach would give time for concerns to be addressed about returning home but with the threat of removal being imminent, minds would be concentrated on resolving the situation in the best interests of all involved as quickly as possible. We envisage that this process would take between

three and six months to be completed in most cases. By increasing the percentage of those that return voluntarily (instead of being forcibly removed) to 50 per cent of all returns that take place (21 per cent in 2007) we estimate that sufficient savings can be made to enable housing and financial support to continue for 16 weeks for all refused asylum seekers at no additional cost than is currently incurred. (For further details of these calculations see section 7.2.7 of the main report.)

#### 7.5 INCREASE THE FORCED REMOVAL OF REFUSED ASYLUM SEEKERS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF A NEGATIVE DECISION, BUT ONLY AS A LAST RESORT WHEN ALL OTHER OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. (DEPENDENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF 7.2.)

As described in recommendation 7.4, a parallel process of engagement with the asylum seeker to encourage voluntary return will run alongside the process that leads to removal. It is recognised that forced removal is challenging. Nonetheless speed should be a priority, and it has to be much quicker than it currently is (average of 403 days, or 13 months in 2005). We recommend that the vast majority of removals take place within three to six months of a negative decision on an asylum claim *only when all other options have been exhausted and a risk assessment has been completed on the return of an individual*. We also recommend that greater support is offered during the removal process with the potential for a support worker to accompany an asylum seeker home when appropriate.

#### 7.6 ONLY DETAIN ASYLUM SEEKERS WHO ARE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY OR THOSE WHO POSE A SERIOUS RISK OF ABSCONDING.

The vast majority of asylum seekers currently detained do not pose a threat to security and studies suggest there is little risk of them absconding.<sup>24</sup> However, the Government is currently in the process of planning an increase in the capacity of the detention estate. We think this is an unnecessary waste of money. We recommend that alternatives to detention are implemented such as bail bonds and voice recognition reporting. We also recommend other measures that will encourage asylum seekers to remain in touch with the Immigration Service such as more flexible reporting requirements and a greater level of communication with the support agencies that work with asylum seekers.

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24 Bruegel I and Natamba E (2002) *Maintaining Contact: What happens after detained asylum seekers get bail?* South Bank University.

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## 7.7 GRANT A TEMPORARY RIGHT TO REMAIN FOR THOSE THAT CANNOT RETURN HOME.

For those asylum seekers whose claim has been refused but who cannot be returned home, a temporary licence for paid employment and the opportunity to contribute to their own support is recommended. This temporary right should entitle the asylum seeker free access to primary and secondary health care as well as access to English Language Classes. It should be reviewed every year.

## 7.8 COMMISSION FURTHER RESEARCH INTO:

- 7.8.1 barriers to removal and voluntary return and how other countries have overcome these barriers
- 7.8.2 ways to provide greater levels of support when returned or removed to home country through existing organisations such as the UN, British Embassies, NGOs, the IOM and others
- 7.8.3 the experiences of those that have returned (both forcibly and voluntarily) to their home country or another country
- 7.8.4 the development of the Gateway programme taking vulnerable refugees from countries with high numbers of people fleeing persecution and war. (See section 6.1 of the main report for details.)

## Members of the Asylum and Destitution Working Group

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**Jonathan Cox** (*Advisor*), Parliamentary and External Relations Officer, Refugee Council

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# About the Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice aims to put social justice at the heart of British politics.

Our policy development is rooted in the wisdom of those working to tackle Britain's deepest social problems and the experience of those whose lives are affected. Our working groups are non-partisan, comprising prominent academics, practitioners and policy makers who have expertise in the relevant fields. We consult nationally and internationally, especially with charities and social enterprises who are the champions of the welfare society.

We are not a typical Westminster 'think-tank'. In addition to policy development, we foster an alliance of poverty fighting organisations that reverse social breakdown and transform communities.

We believe that the surest way the Government can reverse social breakdown and poverty is to enable individuals, communities and voluntary groups to help themselves.

The CSJ was founded by the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith in 2004, as the fulfilment of a pledge he made to Janice Dobbie, a mother whose son had recently died from a drug overdose after he was released from prison.

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