

Contents

- 1 – NRPF Network Research Report – *Social Services Support to People with NRPF: A National Picture***
- 2 – Case Resolution Directorate – Update for Local Authorities**
- 3 – Refugee Action Voluntary Return Services**
- 4 – Department of Health Access of Foreign Nationals to NHS – Proposals Announced**
- 5 – The Sojourner Project – Update**
- 6 – NRPF Network/British Red Cross Conference**
- 7 – NRPF Network Training Programme – New Open-access Dates Added**
- 8 – Changes to Rights of Women Advice Lines**
- 9 – AIRE Centre/MRN Training – Changes to A8 entitlements**

Inside this issue

This bulletin focuses on developments in the area of social services support to people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). In this issue, we announce the release of the NRPF Network's research into social services support to people with NRPF across the UK; we provide an update on the CRD; we provide information on the transition of AVR support from IOM to Refugee Action; we summarise the implications of the Department of Health's access to healthcare proposals; we provide an update on The Sojourner Project; we announce the date of the next NRPF Network/British Red Cross conference and new dates for the NRPF Network Training Programme; we provide details of changes to the RoW advice lines; and details of a training session on the changes to benefit entitlements for A8 nationals.

NRPF Network Research Report – *Social Services Support to People with NRPF: A National Picture (March 2011)*

The NRPF Network has published its third research report into the support provided by local authorities to people with no recourse to public funds across the UK.

The research found that social services departments in 51 local authorities across the UK supported approximately 6,500 people with NRPF in the financial year 2009/10 at a cost of £46.5m. This included support in the form of accommodation,

subsistence and in some circumstances additional social care, provided owing to statutory duties under community care and children's legislation, and staffing costs. These costs are unfunded and local authorities must therefore meet them from existing budgets. This shortfall will become increasingly acute following cuts to local authority budgets as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review,

particularly for authorities supporting large numbers of NRPF clients.

The figures in this report show that there has not been a dramatic change in the numbers of people with NRPF being supported by local authorities and the costs of providing this support, but this is in spite of a higher threshold for support under the National Assistance Act 1948, a UK Border Agency programme dedicated to resolving legacy immigration cases, including those supported by local authorities, and the establishment of The Sojourner Project.

Numbers of single adults supported by local authorities for health reasons have decreased, whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of supported children & family cases. The vast majority of these cases entered the UK on visas, are waiting for a decision on human rights applications for leave to remain in the UK from the UKBA and would be destitute without local authority support. This support can be ongoing for years because of delays in decision-making on immigration claims to the UKBA. The financial burden of providing support this group lies disproportionately with local authorities, who have little control over this decision-making process.

This shift means that fewer asylum cases and a greater number of managed migration cases are being supported by local authorities. The report also shows that there is a lack of 'end of process' activity from the UKBA resulting in the underuse of voluntary return services and enforced removal, and a consequent reliance on local authority services as a safety net for those in limbo. Asylum has historically been a greater strategic priority for the UKBA than managed migration. This report illustrates that in order to assist

local authorities in reducing the spend on NRPF cases, the UKBA must realign its policy priorities and continue working in partnership with the NRPF Network to resolve these issues, through such initiatives as *NRPF Connect*.

The findings of this report show that although local authority practice in this area is on the whole improving, there is still inconsistency of practice between local authorities. There is an increasing number of local authorities nationally that have dedicated NRPF teams, however some local authorities do not record supported cases. Most authorities monitor and review their cases but some do not.

Several issues arise from this situation. Frequent changes of client circumstances and of immigration law and policy mean that NRPF cases must be reviewed regularly; up-to-date intelligence on supported cases means that they are more likely to be resolved through partnership working between local authorities and the UKBA; and failure to monitor NRPF cases raises safeguarding concerns, particularly for children.

A number of recommendations are made in this report to the UKBA (and other government departments) and to local authorities. They include a need for the UKBA to prioritise local authority-supported cases in the same way as those receiving UKBA asylum support. Timely decisions on immigration claims, better communication with local authority partners and greater numbers of returns/removals would facilitate a more effective start-to-end process and result in fewer cases remaining in limbo on local authority support without resolution.

One recommendation requiring legislative change is also made: that families who

have never applied for asylum but have submitted applications to the UKBA for leave to remain under Article 8 European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) should be eligible for UKBA Section 4 Immigration and Asylum Act accommodation and subsistence support rather than support from local authorities.

For local authorities, the report recommends that local policies and procedures are developed to ensure statutory duties to people with NRPf are met; that data is recorded and cases are monitored and reviewed to facilitate resolution and minimise safeguarding risks; and that local authorities should work

in partnership across departments, locality teams and even regionally and nationally, to share expertise and avoid duplication of work.

The report can be accessed by browsing the NRPf Network webpages at www.islington.gov.uk/nrpfnetwork, clicking on 'Policy and Research' and downloading the report from the bottom of the page; or by using the following shortcut: <http://tinyurl.com/6kdns2w>.

The NRPf Network would like to thank all the local authorities that participated in this research.

Case Resolution Directorate – Update for Local Authorities

On the 25th March, the UKBA issued a letter to local authority stakeholders outlining updates on the Case Resolution Directorate's (CRD) progress and providing details on future referral arrangements.

The letter states that the CRD had concluded 403,000 cases by the end of January 2011 and that they remain on track to review all cases in the cohort by summer 2011 or sooner.

A newly established Case Assurance and Audit Unit (CAAU) is now responsible for residual work on the CRD controlled archive (cases the UKBA have been unable to trace and may have left the country) and cases that have been reviewed but not fully concluded. This team will continue to monitor the controlled archive pool and will take forward strategic targeting of potentially traceable cases.

If you have cases that you are supporting that made an asylum claim before March 2007 that you wish to refer to the agency, then please contact Case Audit and Assurance Unit, 7th Floor, The Capital, New Hall Place, Liverpool, L3 9PP. They will also update you on any cases already referred to CRD.

For a copy of the spreadsheet to record the clients you wish to refer to the Case Audit and Assurance Unit, please contact jonathan.price@islington.gov.uk

The UKBA is now increasing their focus on CRD's older non-asylum cohort, and are making some changes to the way that these cases are managed. These files relate to pre-2008 cases, cases of overstayers or cases of those who have been refused an extension of leave (such as students). This also includes cases where an Article 8 claim to private and family life under the European Court of Human Rights has been made.

Up until now these cases have been dealt with by a team in the North West region, however this team is now closing so future referrals should be made to the regional contacts in the text box below.

For a copy of the spreadsheet to record the clients you wish to refer to the Case Audit and Assurance Unit, please contact jonathan.price@islington.gov.uk

The CRD transitional costs fund will continue to be available in the 2011/12 financial year.

Region	Named Contact	Email address	Postal address for Correspondence
LONDON and SOUTH EAST	Ross Lewington	UKBALSEREGIONSSECRETARIATIN-BOX@HOMEOFFICE.GSI.GOV.UK	Regional Directors Office, London and South East Region, 14 th Floor, Long Wing, Lunar House 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY
MIDLANDS and EAST of ENGLAND	Matthew Robinson	Matthew.Robinson11@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	UK Border Agency, Chadwick House, Blenheim Court, Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 2AA
NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE and HUMBERSIDE	Simon Walker	UKBARCTTL@ind.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	FAO Samantha Depledge, UK Border Agency Ground Floor, Waterside Court, Kirkstall Road, Leeds ,LS4 2QB
NORTH WEST	Margie Clarke	Marje.clarke@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	Liverpool Settlement SMT 2 nd Floor, The Plaza 100 Old Hall Street, Liverpool, L3 9QJ
WALES and SOUTH WEST	Jennie Flynn	UKBAWALESCO@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	UKBA Wales and South West Region 3 rd Floor, General Buildings 31-33 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0AB
SCOTLAND and NORTHERN IRELAND	Adam Scarcliffe	Glasgowworkflow@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk	Festival Court, 200 Brand Street, Glasgow, G51 1 DH

Refugee Action Assisted Voluntary Return Services

From 1st April 2011, Refugee Action is running the Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR) programmes for migrants wishing to return to their countries of origin.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) will no longer be running these services and any new referrals should be made to Refugee Action.

However, people who have already left the UK on or before the 31st March will continue to be assisted by IOM after they return to their home countries. Also, responsibility for those who have applied to return, but did not leave by the 1st April will transfer to Refugee Action.

The same services and support packages formerly provided by the IOM will be on offer. They are:

- VARRP programme – for asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers
- AVRFC programme – for families and children
- AVRIM Programme – for visa overstayers and other irregular migrants

The service will include:

- Confidential advice and information for people deciding whether to apply for a voluntary return programme
- Assistance with travel documents, flight bookings and other practicalities for those who do wish to return voluntarily

- Referral to other Refugee Action or local advice services for those who decide they do not wish to return
- Reintegration planning, assistance and support both before and after return

Refugee action has confirmed that additional support will be provided to people with health needs, such as medical escorts.

How to make a referral

To refer clients into the project, call (or ask the client to call) the main freephone number: **0808 800 0007**

The service will have offices, or outreach posts run either by Refugee Action or partner agencies in Portsmouth, London, Cardiff, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and Glasgow.

For more information on the services on offer, see: <http://tinyurl.com/3bn8fmq>

Department of Health Consultation – Proposals Announced

The Department of Health have confirmed that the new regulations regarding access to free NHS secondary healthcare will not exempt local authority-supported clients from charging for NHS services in the same way as Section 4/Section 95 Immigration Asylum Act 1999 (IAA) support recipients and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

This means that refused asylum seekers and visa overstayers receiving support under Section 21 National Assistance Act or Section 17 Children Act or under the Leaving Care Provisions will *not* be eligible for free secondary NHS healthcare,

however those receiving Section 4/Section 95 support from the UKBA *will* be eligible for free secondary NHS healthcare.

The DH stated that “Introducing a wider range of other support related exemptions would be...difficult to administer. It would not be appropriate to do this without further evaluation.”

This is extremely concerning and the NRPF Network is discussing this discrepancy with the Department of Health with a view to amending these proposals.

In addition to introducing the exemption for Section 4/Section 95 IAA support recipients, the regulations will ensure those that have started free treatment will continue it even if their status changes and they become eligible for charging. There is also a proposal to share data about debts for NHS treatment with UKBA so that those with outstanding debts can be refused extended entry to the UK or citizenship.

The Department of Health also propose to carry out a further review on charging arrangements, which will consider the qualifying residency criteria, whether GP services should be charged for and whether to introduce a requirement for health insurance to be tied to visas. This consultation is likely to take place in 2012.

To see the Department of Health's full response to the consultation, see:

<http://tinyurl.com/4d7vmeh>

The Sojourner Project – Update

The Government has reached a decision regarding a permanent solution to financial support for victims of domestic violence on Spouse visas with NRPF. From the 1st April 2012 victims of domestic violence who entered the UK on a Spouse Visa will have access to public funds for a limited period. They will receive benefits for five weeks while they prepare and submit their

application for Indefinite Leave to Remain under the Domestic Violence Rule and a further five weeks while the application is being considered by the UKBA.

Up to April 2012, The Sojourner Project will continue in its current arrangements. For more information, see:

<http://tinyurl.com/37mjkk5>

NRPF Network/British Red Cross Conference – Save the Date!

The NRPF Network and the British Red Cross will be co-hosting a conference entitled *Local authority support to people with no recourse to public funds – Reflections on the past, Looking to the future*.

The conference will take place on Wednesday 15th June 2011 at Islington Town Hall, Islington, North London.

The purpose of this conference is to bring together representatives of local authorities, central government and the voluntary sector to reflect on recent developments in the area of local authority

support to people with no recourse to public funds, to identify emerging issues and explore solutions to new problems.

In particular, the event will look at:

- Impact of the Case Resolution Directorate
- Community Care/Community Mental Health post-M v Slough
- Impact of Birmingham City Council v Clue and the increase of support to children and families with NRPF
- European Economic Area nationals – homelessness, domestic violence and restrictions to support

- Destitution of asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers
- Voluntary return
- Managing NRPF cases – ensuring safeguarding, accountability and secure sharing of data and information

- Impact of cuts in local authority funding on voluntary and community services to the NRPF client group

More information about the conference and how to take part will be available soon. But for now, save the date!

NRPF Network Training Programme – New Open-access Dates Added

The NRPF Network will be providing further ‘open-access’ NRPF Training courses for local authority representatives and the voluntary sector in London and Manchester in June/July 2011.

For the first time, we will be providing open-access courses focusing on the needs of children’s services and adult services, in order to go into more detail about the respective assessment processes. This has been arranged as a result of feedback from stakeholders.

Dates

Manchester – *General NRPF Training*
 Tuesday 7th June 2011 (10am – 4.30pm)
 London – *Voluntary Sector Training*
 Friday 10th June 2011 (9.30am – 1pm)
 London – *Children & Family NRPF Focus*
 Monday 4th July 2011 (10am – 4.30pm)
 London – *Adult NRPF Focus*
 Monday 11th July 2011 (10am – 4.30pm)

To book a place, please complete a booking form which can be downloaded on the following webpage:

<http://tinyurl.com/38wluz3>

For more information about the training, please contact samantha.gill@islington.gov.uk or phone 0207 527 7107.

NRPF Training Programme – Local Authorities

The training is designed for local authority social workers with responsibility for NRPF cases. The training covers the assessment process in detail for adults and children & families with NRPF, including a detailed consideration of how to use case law in the assessment process.

Learning objectives

- To identify who is eligible and who is not eligible for support under social services legislation.
- To be able to use legislation and case law to help resolve complex cases.
- To apply good practice in assessing and supporting individuals and families.
- To be aware of the resources that are available in order to stay up-to-date with policy and legal developments.

Course content

This course covers key issues, legislation and assessments, for adults, children and families, and in regards to human rights obligations. The programme is organised as follows:

- No recourse to public funds - introduction and overview
- Key legislation
- Assessing eligibility for support

- General considerations in assessments of need - adults, children and families, human rights
- Community care and community mental health assessments
- Child in need and human rights assessments
- Good practice in assessing and supporting people with NRPF

- National NRPF Network and the policy context of NRPF
- Case studies

We also provide this training on a commission-basis. For more information on the NRPF Training for local authorities and the voluntary sector, please see: <http://tinyurl.com/37mu8fu>

Changes to Rights of Women Advice Lines

From 1st April 2011, some changes are being made to the Rights of Women advice lines.

Immigration and asylum law advice line

For advice on issues including the rights of EEA nationals and their family members, claiming asylum in the UK, trafficking, domestic violence and immigration law, and no recourse to public funds:

Call 020 7490 7689 (telephone) or 020 7490 2562 (textphone) on:

- Mondays between 2pm-4pm and
- Wednesdays between 11am-1pm

Family law advice line

For advice on issues including domestic violence and abuse, relationship breakdown and issues relating to children,

including parental responsibility, child contact and residence:

Call 020 7251 6577 (telephone) or 020 7490 2562 (textphone) on:

- Mondays between 11am-1pm
- Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 2pm-4pm and 7pm-9pm
- Thursdays between 7pm-9pm and
- Fridays between 12noon-2pm

Criminal law advice line

For advice on issues including sexual offences, domestic violence and harassment, the rights of victims, witnesses and defendants, and criminal injuries compensation:

Call 020 7251 8887 (telephone) or 020 7490 2562 (textphone) on

- Tuesdays between 11am-1pm and
- Thursdays between 2pm-4pm

AIRE Centre/Migrants' Rights Network Training – Changes to A8 entitlements

The AIRE Centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe) and Migrants' Rights Network are organising a training session on welfare entitlements of A8 nationals post-May 2011.

If you would like more information about the training session, please contact Jan Brulc at the Migrants' Rights Network: J.brulc@migrantsrights.org.uk

For more information about the changes that are taking place for A8 nationals in

May 2011, please see: <http://tinyurl.com/3olap3c>

Dates for your Diary

East Midlands Regional NRPF Network meeting

Tuesday 5th April 2011 (10am – 12.30pm)
EM Councils Offices, Melton Mowbray
For more details, please contact kirsty.lowe@emcouncils.gov.uk

East of England Regional NRPF Network meeting

Wednesday 20th April 2011 (from 1pm)
EELGA Offices, Flempton House
For more details, please contact pamusa@menter.org.uk

London Regional NRPF Network meeting

28th June 2011 (2 – 4pm)
For more details, please contact simon.wadsworth@croydon.gov.uk

South East Regional Network meeting

Date and location TBC
For more details, please contact roy.millard@secouncils.gov.uk

Wales NRPF Network meeting

Friday 20th May 2011 (10am – 12pm), Cardiff. For more details, please contact selina.moyo@wsmp.org.uk

Yorkshire & Humberside Regional NRPF Network meeting

Thursday 9th June 2011 (2 – 4pm), St George House, 40 Great George Street, Leeds.

For more details, please contact ted.brown@bradford.gov.uk

For more details on the regional networks, including who can take part, see: <http://tinyurl.com/3575qxt>

The NRPF Network is committed to supporting and working with local authorities, the voluntary sector and central government. The Network has over 1900 members and our website attracts over 1000 web hits per month. The NRPF Network is funded by the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

For further information or to unsubscribe, please contact: nrpf@islington.gov.uk or tel 020 7527 7107

NRPF Network c/o Equalities, Refugee and Migrant Service, Islington Council, Town Hall, Upper Street, LONDON N1 2UD. Web: www.islington.gov.uk/nrpfnetwork