

Asylum: Current Aspects (as at May 2013)

Issues and concerns

Decision-making is getting worse: ‘Statistics used in the *A Question of Credibility* report show the (asylum) process, first highlighted by AI UK in their 2004 report *Get It Right: How Home Office decision making fails refugees*, is actually becoming more inaccurate with regard to first-instance decisions, with 25 per cent of refusals now being overturned on appeal. (www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latestnews, 19 April 2013)

Unbelievable truths? ‘In 42 of the 50 randomly selected cases we analysed (84% of the research sample) the Immigration Judge indicated that the primary reason for an initial decision being overturned was that the UKBA case owner had wrongly made a negative assessment of the applicant’s credibility. (*A Question of Credibility: Why so many initial decisions on asylum claims are overturned at appeal*. Amnesty International with Still Human, Still Here. April 2013)

Promises, promises... ‘In black and white, above the Home Secretary’s signature, the government has promised that more information will be available to women seeking asylum throughout the process, and that victims of sexual violence in the asylum system will be referred for specialist support. There will be better training for officials making decisions on women’s claims, especially on the key area of credibility, and enhanced information about conditions for women in their home countries will be used to inform their decisions. **Promises have been made before, of course. So this is not the end of Missed Out, but rather the impetus for its next phase.**’ (www.migrantsrights.org.uk/migration-pulse/2013/missed-out-campaign-success-future. The Missed Out campaign for the rights of women in the asylum system is driven by Debora Singer at Asylum Aid)

Facts and Figures

In 2012 there were 21,785 asylum applications, a rise of 10%. There were increases in migrant numbers from Pakistan (+844), Syria (+637), India (+531), Bangladesh (+437) and Albania (+419). However this remains way below the peak of 2002 (84,132)¹.

In 2011 the UK received 0.41 asylum applicants per 1000 people in its population, below the European average (0.65 for EU plus Norway and Switzerland)².

During the fourth quarter of 2012, 61 children entered detention. Higher than the fourth quarter of 2011 (45), but well below the third quarter of 2009 (322); the recent rise reflects greater use of Cedars pre-departure accommodation and the new ‘Family Return Process’³.

Sources:

^{1/3} See www.gov.uk/government/organization/home-office/series/migration-statistics

² *Migration to the UK: Asylum*. Dr Scott Blinder, The Migration Observatory, Feb 2013