More destitution in Leeds: repeat survey of destitute asylum seekers and refugees approaching local agencies for support

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Aims

This study reports on a second survey of destitute asylum seekers and refugees approaching local agencies and aims to explore changes in numbers, patterns of destitution and consequences for service provision.

Methodology

A four week survey April - May 2008 of destitute clients was carried out by five agencies. Six interviews were held with

managers of statutory and voluntary agencies.

Key issues

The survey suggested that destitution had substantially increased. Visits to support agencies more than doubled. The survey indicated a chronic problem of destitution including people destitute for one year or more. Those surveyed came from 35 countries: the largest groups were Zimbabwe, Iran and Eritrea. There was a significant increase in children made destitute and in rough sleeping. There was an increase in those made destitute after having their claim processed under the New Asylum Model.

Conclusions

The majority recorded as destitute were refused asylum seekers, although destitution can occur at all stages of the asylum process. Many people are entitled to support but are destitute because of procedural failures such as administrative errors, waiting for support to begin, and a lack of interim support measures following change of status on resolution of their asylum claim.

Recommendations

Recommendations are aimed primarily at the United Kingdom Border Agency [UKBA] in the government, as well as Social Services, local government and charitable trusts. UKBA should

improve the process for applying for Section 4 support; improve procedures for people leaving detention; lengthen the NAM process to enable people to build connections; grant temporary leave to remain, particularly in cases where removal is difficult; and provide regular regional statistics on refusals and removals. Social Services with UKBA should implement procedures to ensure no child is refused support. Resources should be provided to struggling local agencies.

Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
Refused asylum seekers
Topic
Destitution
Housing and welfare
Welfare entitlements
Place
Leeds
West Yorkshire
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2008
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Report
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Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
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