

ACCESS TO JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 27th

ASYLUM SEEKERS LEFT STRANDED BY CLOSURE OF IMMIGRATION ADVISORY SERVICE SPEAK OUT

**List of concerns to be handed in to Legal Services Commission
tomorrow THURSDAY, JULY 28th, 1.30pm - anniversary of the UN
Convention on Refugees**

Asylum seekers in Greater Manchester, who have been left stranded by the closure of the Immigration Advisory Service, are to present their concerns to the Legal Services Commission tomorrow (Thursday, July 28th, 1.30pm).

Supported by lawyers, human rights activists, IAS employees and former employees, they will formally hand in a letter to the LSC at Lee House, 90 Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester.

Ironically, the letter will be presented on the 60th anniversary of the UN Convention relating to the status of refugees, which was drawn up to protect people whose lives and freedom were at risk.

The new Access to Justice group, formed at an open meeting in Manchester last week, will campaign for the rights of people affected by the IAS closure – many of whom are fleeing torture, persecution and imprisonment today, six decades after the 1951 convention.

Asylum seekers who spoke at the meeting included a woman with a young baby. She had been told IAS had closed her case even though she has a final hearing coming up and no access to legal representation.

The meeting also heard that some people had not even been informed IAS was no longer operating and that others were being encouraged by immigration judges to pursue their appeals unrepresented.

The statement of concerns to be presented to the LSC will also include queries about funding for cases which are partly complete - and an assurance that former IAS clients will not be allocated new representatives outside Manchester because they cannot afford the travel expenses.

Access to Justice is also anxious about the implications of the Home Office continuing to process files, saying that it could lead to people having their cases refused and being made destitute without legal representation.

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