

Bulletin 12 December 2008

SDV News and events

Fundraising pub quiz and raffle

Thanks to all who came to the pub quiz on Tuesday. It was a really successful night and raised over £160 for SDV.

Christmas fundraising

Remember easyfundraising whenever you shop online. Also remember easysearch when you search the internet. Both can generate funds for SDV. Find details of how to register for both on the SDV website.

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Free Funds

On the "free funds" area of the easyfundraising website, there are lots of ways to raise funds for free for SDV. These include free trials with lovefilm (£8) and blockbuster (£6.25) and filling in a short survey for the chance to win a Honda civic (£3 donation). If we all did this, we could raise quite a lot of money!

Got to easyfundraising using this link

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Oakington IRC: Fear and use of force on rise at migrant centre, inspector says

Conditions have deteriorated significantly at Oakington immigration removal centre in Cambridgeshire, with half the detainees saying they feel unsafe and staff increasingly using force, according to the chief inspector of prisons.

A report by Anne Owers, published today, says that Oakington, which had been a flagship "fast-track" asylum centre, has lost direction and purpose and is not performing well, especially in the areas of safety and respect.

The relationships between the private security staff running the centre and the 328 detainees have deteriorated to the extent that they are significantly worse than at any other removal centre. The chief inspector says the management and staff take so little interest in individual detainees that they were unaware of the fact that they had been holding one Chinese man for nearly two years.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/dec/12/oakington-migrant-centre-asylum>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3708352/Chinese-asylum-seeker-held-for-two-years-despite-wanting-to-go-home.html>

Ministers say they will ignore asylum-seekers' 11th-hour pleas

Asylum-seekers have been told that the Home Office can ignore last-minute legal challenges to removals from this country where the Government has hired a chartered aircraft to fly refugees home.

A letter sent to a group of Nigerian asylum-seekers who were to be deported last night says they may be removed even if one of them seeks an 11th-hour judicial review from the court.

The policy has been criticised by the Liberal Democrat peer Lord Avebury who has asked the Government to justify the immigration order in a question tabled in the House of Lords yesterday. While the letter, written by an official from the UK Borders Agency, makes clear that removals will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, it says deportations will be stopped only on the "order or direction of the court". It adds: "the Home Office may, in line with enforcement operational instructions, decide not to defer removal in the face of a last-minute threat or application to seek permission for judicial review."

A spokeswoman for the UK Borders Agency denied that the letter was "intimidating", saying that the families had adequate notice of their removal and that all their representations had been properly considered. She said that the asylum-seekers could seek an injunction against deportation which the Home Office would fully respect.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ministers-say-they-will-ignore-asylumseekers-11thhour-pleas-1062895.html>

Minister unveils new detention facility

New expanded detention facilities for illegal immigrants facing removal from the UK were opened at Manchester Airport by Border and Immigration Minister Phil Woolas today.

Pennine House, a short term holding facility based at the city's airport can now hold up to 32 detainees awaiting flights out of the UK. This new expanded facility will help the UK Border Agency ensure the swift removal of individuals with no right to be in the country.

The refurbished facility, which has doubled in capacity, now includes a self-contained area for female or vulnerable detainees and improved living, eating and washing facilities, creating a secure facility fit for the 21st century.

Mr Woolas said: "The Government will seek to remove anyone who is here illegally, and we make no apologies for being tough on illegal immigration.

<http://www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/lfi/168525>

Other news and events

Universal declaration of human rights film series

At the Filmhouse Edinburgh

<http://www.filmhousecinema.com/seasons/universal-declaration-of-human-rights-film-series/>