

PRESS RELEASE



Date: Monday 6th November 2006

'SEEKING ASYLUM ALONE' – Unaccompanied Children and Refugee Protection in the UK

'*Seeking Asylum Alone*' UK is to be released on Monday 13th November at Garden Court Chambers.

The research is part of a larger study into the treatment of such children entitled '*Seeking Asylum Alone*' which to date has involved similar research in Australia and the United States. The UK report was co-authored by Jacqueline Bhabha of Harvard Law School and Nadine Finch, a barrister at Garden Court Chambers.

'*Seeking Asylum Alone*' UK examined the treatment of separated and trafficked children seeking asylum within the UK. It sought to establish whether the asylum determination process assisted or hindered their pursuit of protection and whether this process complied with regional and international human rights standards. The research uncovered a pervasive tension between the Government's commitment to ensure children were protected from abuse whilst they were in the United Kingdom and the imperative of increasingly strict immigration controls. This led to there being a culture of disbelief in relation to the accounts given by children. Often they were not even believed to be children at all.

Many children were also not provided with the suitable accommodation and support by local authorities. Nor did they always gain access to lawyers with the necessary expertise and experience to successfully argue their cases. Others continued to suffer from post traumatic stress disorder and depression which went untreated or were wrongfully detained as adults in immigration removal centres.

There were of course examples of good practice but the fact that fewer children than adults were granted protection under the Refugee Convention and fewer succeeded in any subsequent appeals was a cause for great concern. Thousands of unaccompanied or separated children arrive and claim asylum in the UK each year. The research revealed that this phenomenon presented great challenges to a whole range of different agencies. In particular is highlighted the Government's sometimes ambivalent attitude to international human rights norms.



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Notes for Editors

1. Research in the UK was co-ordinated by Nadine Finch, an experienced immigration barrister at Garden Court Chambers. She can be contacted at nadinef@gclaw.co.uk.
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3. Further information about Garden Court Chambers can be found at www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk

