

Refugee Children's Consortium

The Government has chosen to close a safe route for separated children seeking protection to come to the UK, under section 67 Immigration Act 2016. The 'Dubs' amendment required the Home Office to transfer children to England and Wales in consultation with local authorities.

We do not consider that the closure of the route offering safe passage to the UK for children who need protection under section 67 Immigration Act 2016 is justified. Section 67 does not have a statutory time-limit, and imposing an arbitrary one is not in the spirit of the amendment agreed by the Government. Coming after earlier restrictions on eligibility according to age and nationality, the closure of the scheme suggests that the Government never embraced the amendment as an opportunity to protect children at risk of exploitation.

Children on the move should be considered children first and foremost. They need protection, not only from persecution but also from the risks they face in fleeing persecution. Limiting access to safe routes for protection across Europe pushes the most vulnerable into the hands of the least scrupulous. There is growing evidence that failing to provide routes to move countries legally increases, rather than reduces, human trafficking and smuggling.

Human trafficking can flourish in the absence of alternatives and where the push factors of conflict, poverty and desperation remain. The Dubs amendment represented an opportunity to tackle human trafficking through providing an alternative to a limited number of children, and it is disappointing to see that the Government is not committed to finding a safe route for even that small number.

Members of the Refugee Children's Consortium are:

Action for Children, Asylum Aid, Asylum Welcome, AVID (Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees), Bail for Immigration Detainees, BASW – The British Association of Social Workers, Become, Cambridgeshire Refugee Resettlement Campaign, CARAS, Centrepoint, Children and Families Across Borders, Children England, Child Poverty Action Group, Children's Rights Alliance for England, The Children's Society, CoramBAAF, Coram Children's Legal Centre, Coram Voice, DOST, ECPAT, Family Rights Group, The Fostering Network, Freedom from Torture, Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, Home for Good, Hope for the Young, The Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA), JCORE, Kent Refugee Action Network, Law Centres' Network, Liberty, Love to Learn, Medical Justice, Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit (MiCLU), NCB, NSPCC, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, Paiwand, Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens, (PRCBC), Project 17, The Prince's Trust, RAMFEL, Refugee Action, Refugee Council, Refugee Support Network, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Scottish Refugee Council, Student Action for Refugees (STAR), The Trinity Centre, Welsh Refugee Council, UNICEF UK.

Barnardo's, The British Red Cross, and UNHCR all have observer status.