

## ***Media release***

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### **Charities help young asylum seekers where government has failed**

Charities play a crucial role in providing support and care to young asylum seekers and refugees in the UK where government has failed, according to a new report published today.

The report by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), *A long way to go*, highlights the difficulties faced by children seeking asylum. Although they are entitled to the same education and healthcare services as any other children, many do not receive adequate protection and care while they are in the UK.

Martin Brookes, Director of Research at NPC said: "The role of charities is vital in supporting young asylum seekers and refugees. Their work is crucial, not only in helping the mental and physical health of the young people involved, but also in helping tackling the stresses and strains that can arise in local communities."

The 3,000 children that arrive unaccompanied in the UK every year seeking asylum face a complicated and constantly changing asylum process. Even though 95% are not accepted by the Home Office as refugees, most are allowed to stay in the UK until they are 18 years old.

However many can end up leading isolated lives. Although social services are obliged to provide adequate care to children during their time in the UK, support varies widely between local authorities. As a result many children are left unsupported, putting them at risk of abuse and exploitation and can result in anti-social behaviour.

NPC says some child asylum seekers are also wrongly held in detention. A study by the Refugee Council found that 60% of age-disputed individuals at a particular detention centre were later found to be children, despite official guidance that children must be given the benefit of the doubt in age disputes and should not be detained. Children who are wrongly detained not only face the risk of immediate deportation, but are more likely to develop mental health problems, with a damaging effect on their academic and social development.

NPC's report identifies three areas where the work of charities is critical: supporting children through the asylum process; accessing education and improving other services; and increasing refugee children's integration into society.



The report highlights charities working effectively at the different stages encountered by asylum seeking children. While Save the Children lobbies government on their behalf for improvements to the social service care, groups such as the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture provide much needed therapy and support for children exposed to violence and torture.

DOST at the Trinity Centre in East London provides stop-gap education for newly-arrived asylum seekers without a school place, while lobbying local colleges to accept them, a vital necessity if they are to integrate with the local community as well as bettering their own chance for success in life.

#### **-Ends-**

For further information about NPC, its research reports and charity recommendations, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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#### **Notes to Editors**

1. New Philanthropy Capital advises all types of donors on how to give more effectively. It identifies examples of charities with highly effective approaches to tackling problems in the sector. By recommending these charities to potential donors, NPC aims to increase the quantity and quality of resources available to the charitable sector.
2. NPC focuses on human welfare, including problems in communities and families, education, and health and disability in the UK. NPC has published research on sectors ranging from cancer to older people, and domestic violence to special educational needs.
3. NPC develops a detailed understanding of social problems by talking to policy-makers, practitioners, academics and other experts. Its charity recommendations are arrived at after visiting and analysing charities across the sector. Assessments are made of the achievements, the need for additional funding, the financial structure and fundraising potential, as well as the risks.
4. NPC uses its research and experience to help donors ensure they have high impact and a rewarding experience. This can involve developing a tailored giving strategy to meet specific goals, selecting which charities to support and reporting on impact. Donors can also access NPC's research and its recommendations at no cost on NPC's website.