

# Women's Asylum News

## Women's Project at Asylum Aid

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## Lead Article

### Listening to Refugee #WomensVoices

*“My name is Mina and I’ve been a refugee since the day I was born.”* Mina Jaf has been an activist and vocal advocate for refugee women’s rights for several years. Last April, she received the Voice of Courage 2016 Award, a Women’s Refugee Commission’s Award [celebrating](#) refugee women for their action and strength. Invited to speak at the final event of the #womensvoices project, she said: *“I have just come back from Greece, where the situation is unbelievable in terms of male violence. It is not every day I see it, but every minute. There is no progress, and no action.”* The reality she testified about was both the reason for the implementation of European Women’s Lobby (EWL) project and the motivation for bringing change for the women’s movement in Europe.

The [#womensvoices project](#) is a unique and impactful project led by EWL, in partnership with the Women’s Refugee Commission and the European Network of Migrant Women. EWL membership, representing more than 2000 organisations from the 28 EU member states and three candidate countries, envisions a society in which women’s contribution to all aspects of life is recognised, rewarded and celebrated - in leadership, in care and in production; all women have self-confidence, freedom of choice, and freedom from violence and exploitation; and no woman or girl is left behind. **Implemented from January to June 2016, the #womensvoices project built on EWL’s work on male violence and on asylum, and answered to the demand of EWL members to see a joint EWL action to denounce the violation of refugee women’s human rights.**

**When the flows of refugees increased and brought the issue on the European agenda last year, EWL members were at the forefront of the reality faced by refugee women and girls.** They demonstrated, signed petitions, and raised awareness on the many forms of violence that women and girl refugees face on their way towards so-called peace: on the move and in the centres, they face rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, from different perpetrators; they have to resort to prostitution in order to get access to food, housing or transport; they face domestic violence; girls are being sold for marriage or trafficked for sexual exploitation. The EWL alerted EU decision-makers, through a simple – though obvious – message: [Asylum is not gender neutral!](#) This motto had already been at the core of EWL work on asylum, and was the title of a joint advocacy guide of EWL and Asylum Aid in 2007 calling for gender sensitive policies at EU level.

**EWL’s membership was at the core of the project, as we believe that our members have the experience and expertise, being in direct contact with women and girls.** Our methodology was unique as we wanted the project to be participatory, to include women’s and women refugees’ voices, and to mobilise the largest possible number of key players on the issue. In order to have the broader picture on the situation of women and girl refugees in Europe, and to develop joint demands, EWL members and experts on violence against women worked together and provided their analysis on the situation in their country, through a questionnaire looking at national policies on violence against women and on asylum, and the situation on the ground.

The EWL Secretariat developed a stakeholders’ mapping, which was key to identify the key actors in the field, and give an overview of the stakes and political context. We met with a

lot of stakeholders in Brussels, informing them on the issue of women refugees and asking them about their actions. In April, the EWL organised the #womensvoices Forum in Brussels, convening its members from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Baltic States, together with key players on the issue. Representatives of UN agencies, EU member states, NGOs, the European Commission and the European Parliament, as well as foundations, gathered for a fruitful strategic meeting and delivered collective advocacy tools that are shared in the final report. Debora Singer, from Asylum Aid, joined us and shared her expertise to help us elaborate our advocacy tool 'Engendering the asylum systems'.



*Participants at the EWL #WomensVoices Forum 19 April 2016*

Finally, the project's recommendations were unveiled during a high-level event on 2 June in Brussels, the **#womensvoices European Dialogue**, a strategic discussion between women's organisations and decision-makers, with more than 120 participants from the European political scene. Women's voices were at the core of the event: together with Mina Jaf, women activists and representatives from women's organisations shared the reality they see in their country. Marcy Hersh, from the Women's Refugee Commission, just came back from a [field trip in Greece](#): *"Almost no sites were designed to mitigate the risks of gender-based violence (GBV), and there is limited assistance to GBV survivors or support for other vulnerable refugees, including children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers."*

**EWL #womensvoices project delivered, in only 5 months, a powerful outcome: strong policy recommendations and three advocacy tools** that women's organisations and human rights groups can use in their work at all levels. It provided a real response to the situation, in line with the climate and political debate: on 8 March, the European Parliament had adopted a [resolution on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers](#); the World Humanitarian Summit took place in May; and the EU institutions are in the process of reviewing their asylum and migration policies.

In this context, EWL recommendations, comprised in the EWL #womensvoices report, prove to be very timely, relevant and strategic, building on a momentum of urgency, by calling for:

- Comprehensive policies to end all forms of violence against women and girls in the EU and its member states, and specific measures to ensure that women and girl refugees and asylum seekers are protected and able to access justice.
- A humanitarian response which succeeds in protecting women and girls from male violence and exploitation.
- Gender-sensitive asylum policies and procedures to help women and girls to escape or denounce male violence and to access their full human rights.



*EWL #WomensVoices European Dialogue 2 June 2016*

Following up on the #womensvoices European Dialogue, and ahead of the European Council of June which included migration on its agenda, the EWL and its members sent [letters to the EU decision-makers](#) with concrete demands: *“We call on you to bring high attention to our report and its concrete demands. In particular, we call on you to ensure that the EU and all its member states ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention, without any reserve, and mainstream the specific needs of refugee and migrant women through the 5 Ps Framework developed in our report. We call on you to ensure that transit/accommodation centres are built and staffed in a gender-sensitive manner, and to use our check list ‘Implementing a gender-sensitive humanitarian response’ at all levels. We call on you to ensure that EU and national asylum procedures comply with the UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection and include a gender perspective in all aspects, according to our check list ‘Engendering the asylum systems’.”*

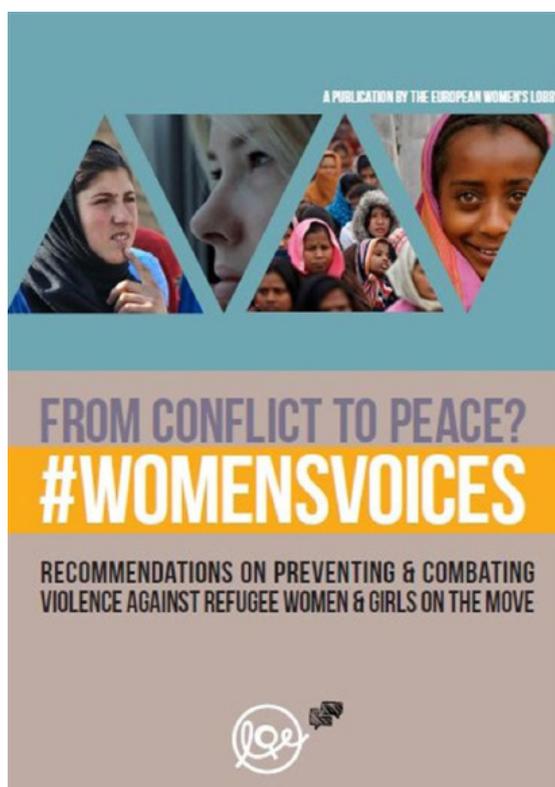
The situation of refugee women and girls continues to be a key concern of EWL membership, which adopted a motion, at its General Assembly on 4 June, on the human rights of women and girls refugees. In May, leaders of the world came together at the World Humanitarian Summit and called for gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights to become pillars of humanitarian action. **To make sure that words transform into concrete action, the EWL and its partners will continue to put pressure on the EU and its member states, and to raise awareness so that refugee women and girls are protected from all forms of male violence, everywhere in Europe.**

## Testimony from a women's NGO in former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

*“A woman was physically assaulted by her father in her country of origin because she married a man from a different religion. Her father was a police officer and she could not protect herself in her own country. Therefore, she decided to leave the country. She arrived in Macedonia and asked for asylum. Her claim was refused by the authorities. Currently her case is in front of the constitutional court and she is in the asylum centre in Skopje. During this decision making process the women is being accommodated in the Vizbegovo asylum centre in Skopje. The centre is a collective facility where women are often exposed to gender based violence. The facility is not light enough, not secure for women, there is limited access to hygiene facilities, access to medical help is very also limited. Other women have complained that they were sexually accosted by police personnel and social workers in the centre. However, these claims never went into procedure due to the fact that women were scared to report in order not to lose the asylum right.”*

### Useful links:

- On EWL #womensvoices report and final event: <http://www.womenlobby.org/Time-for-EU-action-to-implement-gender-sensitive-humanitarian-response-say?lang=en>
- [End male violence on the route from conflict to peace](#), VITA International, a report of EWL #womensvoices final event
- On EWL #womensvoices project: <http://www.womenlobby.org/Check-out-new-EWL-WRC-project-From-conflict-to-peace-Women-s-and-girls-voices?lang=en>



*Pierrette Pape is Policy & Campaigns Director, European Women's Lobby*

## Sector Update

### Symposium on Sexual violence against women and credibility

The [Network for Contemporary Feminisms](#) at University of Westminster held a symposium on Sexual Violence Against Women: Voice and Representation on Friday 17th June 2016 in London. This summary focuses on the aspects relevant to women seeking asylum.

Keir Starmer MP, then Shadow Minister for Immigration gave a talk focussing on three cases that concerned violence against women and girls that he worked on in his role as Director of Public Prosecutions and head of the Crown Prosecution Service from 2008 to 2013.

A number of very significant issues emerged from the cases, offering insights into the struggles that women and girls who have been the victims of sexual violence face when reporting the crimes to the police. A key issue in Keir Starmer's talk was the need for safe places to report crimes of sexual violence against women and girls. Keir discussed cases that revealed the difficulty that victims of sexual violence have in voicing their experiences to police and within a Court of Law. Keir outlined the need for employers to offer help to victims of domestic violence in the workplace.

The need for proper access to counselling was a central issue that Keir raised, and a point that was addressed throughout the day. The case studies discussed by Keir revealed the ways in which the legal system hinders the confidentiality of victim's narratives if they choose to have counselling.

The first panel of the afternoon, 'Sexual Violence: Belief and Credibility', brought together three speakers from public-facing bodies: Akima Thomas, Clinical Director and founder of the [Women and Girls Network](#); Dr Carlene Firmin, MBE, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bedfordshire and head of the [MsUnderstood](#) partnership; and Debora Singer, MBE, Policy and Research Manager at [Asylum Aid](#).

Akima Thomas gave an important talk that centred on the issue of critical remembering. Her paper resonated with Keir Starmer's concerns over counselling provisions for victims of sexual violence. A practising therapist, Akima offered an understanding of the essential role that therapy plays in helping women with the pain and struggle of coming to terms with their traumatic experiences. Akima opened by reading affirmation cards written by women and girls who have experienced sexual violence. The affirmations voiced survivors' testimonies and highlighted the importance of storytelling and testimony as modes of resistance.

Carlene Firmin offered a rigorous position paper that took up the issue of credibility. Through a number of analytical slides and empirical analysis of statistics, Carlene brought to light the struggles that women and girls meet in terms of credibility when discussing experiences of sexual violence. The paper discussed vulnerability factors, violent and unsafe contexts where young women experience sexual harassment.

One slide detailed the narrative of a young girl's testimony by the Crown Prosecution Service, and the problematic language used to narrate her experience. Carlene's paper exposed the issues surrounding credibility, and the way in which cross-examination of testimonies misinterpret the women's and girls' voices and can lead to a perceived lack of credibility within a 'culture of disbelief'; it revealed that in focusing on young women's behaviours and choices, rather than the contexts in which those behaviours or choices occur, the pro-

professional response to sexual exploitation fails to sufficiently recognise the social nature of abuse.

Debora Singer addressed the issues of credibility for women seeking asylum. Debora's talk took up the issue of a 'culture of disbelief' in cases in which women have been refused asylum based on negative assessments of credibility. She discussed her work on '[Double Standards Facing Women Seeking Asylum in Europe](#)' and the [Protection Gap Campaign](#). The question of interpretation and oral testimony was a critical point raised. Inconsistent narratives for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence are often the result of trauma, as are gaps in memory, and, for women seeking asylum, language barriers and errors in translation.

Three vital issues emerged in the discussions during the first panel: critical remembering, contextless accounts, and the struggle of women and girls to narrate their testimonies within a culture of disbelief. The question of language was central to all of the papers; women and girls face a double oppression in terms of narrating their traumatic experiences of sexual abuse. Trauma often creates non-linear testimonies for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence and these testimonies can then be discredited on the basis of their non-linearity. Non-linearity is often falsely read as a form of inconsistency.

Furthermore, testimonies are personal, subjective accounts, the objective language of the law often oppresses testimony told in subjective language, and submits personal accounts to an institutional interpretation.

The symposium is the beginning of a larger project 'Sexual Violence Against Women: Empowering Voice and Enacting Change through the Arts and Humanities'. The hope is that in forming a cross-disciplinary community, it will be possible to foster solidarity and create the conditions for bringing about positive change in the area of sexual violence against women.

*Georgina Colby is Lecturer in English at the University of Westminster*

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## National News

### Detention of Pregnant Women: new guidance

Under the new Immigration Act, pregnant women will no longer be allowed to be detained for longer than [72 hours](#). The Home Office has issued new guidance on this rule entitled [Chapter 55a, Detention of pregnant women](#) on 12th July 2016.

This guidance follows up the section in the Immigration Bill 2016 (enacted 12th May 2016) which brings in a provision that limits the detention of pregnant women (section 60). This in turn follows intensive lobbying by Women for Refugee Women and Medical Justice, amongst others. Although the time limit does not go as far as many hoped (an absolute exclusion of pregnant women being detained was the key demand of campaigners) it is an improvement compared to the current situation where pregnant women have been detained for weeks or months. This is evidenced in Medical Justice's report, [Expecting Change](#) and [I am Human](#) by Women for Refugee Women).

According to the new law, the time limit for the detention of pregnant women is 72 hours, with the possibility of an extension of 7 days in "exceptional circumstances" only with ministerial approval.

The guidance stresses that *“the strong preference is for pregnant women with no lawful basis of stay in the UK to leave voluntarily and to be encouraged to do so. Measures to encourage or achieve voluntary departure should normally be tried first. Only where such measures have failed, are assessed as unlikely to succeed or are considered inappropriate (e.g. because of a risk of public harm), should consideration be given to enforced removal... The enforced removal of a pregnant woman must only be pursued where it can be achieved safely and there is no suggestion that her baby is due before the planned removal date.”* Extensions should be avoided if possible.

The guidance states that “exceptional circumstances” which may justify detention of a pregnant woman who is not being removed shortly are likely to be confined to issues relating to risk of public harm (e.g. criminality or national security).

The immigration staff will expect medical or documentary evidence of pregnancy unless a woman is visibly pregnant.

If a woman being detained is discovered to be pregnant, she must be released unless her detention remains within the time limit.

If a woman has been detained and her removal does not progress, she should be released. She may still be detained again under these same procedures at a later date, as periods spent in detention are not considered to be cumulative.

Monitoring this guidance will be very important to ensure that the time pregnant women spend in immigration detention is strictly limited.

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### **Parliamentary Question reveals extent of sexual assaults at Yarl’s Wood**

Six formal allegations of sexual assault were made by detainees at Yarl’s Wood against guards between 2013 and 2015, a Parliamentary Question has revealed, after the Home Office originally declined to provide the information.

Angela Crawley, SNP MP for Lanark and Hamilton East asked the then Immigration Minister, James Brokenshire, about the issue in a [written question](#) on 20 June 2016, receiving an answer on 28 June. Crawley asked both how many incidents of rape and sexual assault had been reported at the centre in the last three years, and how many of these women had subsequently been deported.

The reply specified that “there have been six allegations of sexual assault made by detainees against staff at Yarl’s Wood immigration removal centre between 2013 and 2015. Of these six allegations, one was made in 2013, three in 2014 and two in 2015.”

The response, however, stated that data on which of the women in question had since been deported was “held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost”.

Until forced to respond to the parliamentary question, the Home Office had [refused](#) to reveal the information, despite being subject to legislation that requires public bodies to disclose information that is in the public interest, citing the likelihood of harming the ‘commercial interests’ of private companies involved in running the centre.

A [report](#) by Women for Refugee Women last year found that 13 of 38 women interviewed had been seen while they were naked, 16 said men had seen them in the shower and 14

said men had seen them while they were using the toilet. Earlier research from Women for Refugee Women indicates that around 70% of women detained in Yarl's Wood were victims of rape and/or other forms of sexual violence in their country of origin.

Yarl's Wood is currently run by Serco, which secured a contract in November 2014 to continue running it for eight years. The company has previously stressed that 'punitive action is taken where necessary by dismissing members of staff'. However, in August of last year, chief prisons inspector Nick Hardwick called the centre a 'place of national concern' after a report found more than half of women detained there say they feel unsafe. Labour MP and chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz, criticised the Home Office's refusal to answer requests for information about sexual violence against detainees: 'The defence of commercial interest can never be used when there are important issues of policy that should be in the public domain'.

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## International News

### Women flee rape in Burundi

Women fleeing outbreaks of violence in Burundi are reaching Tanzania with harrowing tales of sexual violence, according to [reports](#) from UNHCR. More than 137,000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring Tanzania since President Pierre Nkurunziza announced just over a year ago that he would run for a third term. The announcement ignited a wave of protests, violence and security crackdowns in the country, with an alarming pattern of rape and sexual violence emerging. Survivors in the Tanzanian refugee camps are trying to cope with the consequences of the assaults. Several women in the camp have given birth to babies born of rape. Some are facing rejection by their husbands.

UNHCR and its partners are working to provide new arrivals at the camp who have suffered sexual violence with prompt medical treatment, counselling and legal services. However, there are numerous challenges in providing these services. Reaching survivors is often difficult, as a fear of stigma and shame prevents many people from coming forward. These difficulties are compounded by funding limitations, with UNHCR having received only 30 per cent of the funding it needs to help those displaced by the Burundi crisis. As such, long-term programmes such as specialized counselling, education, and skills training have fallen short in preventing and treating sexual violence.

Rape survivors at the Tanzania camp [list](#) the perpetrators of their assaults as security agents, Imbonerakure (the ruling party's youth wing), police or military or unknown. A [report](#) released by Refugees International earlier this year indicates that rape is a 'facet of the crisis'.

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### Green energy project to protect refugees from rape in Uganda

A new green energy [program](#) in Uganda aims to keep refugee women and girls safe from sexual assault. A consortium of international agencies, including UNHCR, World Food Programme and the Women's Refugee Commission have established a new green energy program providing energy-saving stoves and slow-burning briquettes to refugee women in the Kyaka II refugee settlement in western Uganda.

These stoves eliminate the need for women and girls to search for firewood in remote areas far from their homes and the protection of others. There have been numerous reports of sexual assaults on female refugees carried out by military personnel from nearby barracks.

Recent research and reports have [highlighted](#) the link between sexual assault and firewood collection. Experts and refugee aid groups have called for women to be offered alternative fuel and cooking options as effective tools in combatting sexual violence. The programme has distributed 1,000 stoves for free as part of a pilot programme. The factory also employs 24 refugees to make the stoves and briquettes.

The UNHCR estimates that Uganda hosts more than 500,000 refugees and asylum seekers. The Kyaka II settlement, where the pilot programme has been implemented, hosts refugees from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kyaka II's refugees are expected to have moved from traditional cooking methods to using energy-efficient stoves within three years, one woman said, 'our worries of travelling long journeys for firewood will be over'.

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### **First ever Refugee Olympic team hosts four women**

The International Olympic Commission has [announced](#) that four women and six men will form the first Refugee Olympic team, competing in running, swimming and judo. They will have a home in the Olympic Village, have the Olympic anthem played in their honour and the Olympic flag will lead them into the Olympic Stadium. The IOC President Thomas Bach said, "This will be a symbol of hope for all the refugees in our world, and will make the world better aware of the magnitude of this crisis. It is also a signal to the international community that refugees are our fellow human beings and are an enrichment to society."

The four women in the Refugee Olympic team include runner Anjelina Nada Lohalith, who will compete in the 1500m race. Anjelina fled the war in South Sudan and found refuge in Kenya;

800m runner Rose Nathike Lokonyen, is also from South Sudan;

Yolande Bukasa Mabika fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo after the civil war. She will compete in the judo tournament;

The newest woman refugee on the team is swimmer Yusra Mardini, who now lives in Berlin, having fled the war in Syria.

These refugee athletes will be demonstrating that despite the unimaginable trauma that they have faced, anyone can contribute to society through their talent, skills and strength of the human spirit.

*Photos and interviews of the women are here <http://www.glamour.com/story/meet-the-women-who-are-part-of-the-olympics-first-all-refugee-team>*

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## **Publications**

### **EU-Turkey deal leaves women and girls unprotected from gender-based violence**

A new [report](#) by the Women's Refugee Commission has slated the EU-Turkey deal for its impact on women refugees' safety saying, 'the political decision by the EU to close borders, implement harsh policies...and return refugees to Turkey was a catalyst for today's dangerous circumstances for women and girls.'

The EU-Turkey agreement is criticised for failing refugee women and girls, limiting their access to humanitarian and legal protection along the European refugee migration route. As [Women's Asylum News 136 \(June/July 2016\)](#)

a result of the EU-Turkey agreement and the closing of borders to refugees wishing to travel to their desired destinations, Greece, traditionally primarily a 'transit' country for asylum seekers, is forced to host them in a system that was not designed to offer legal or humanitarian protection on a large or long-term scale.

In makeshift refugee camps and detention centres, little effort has been directed towards mitigating the risks of gender-based violence (GBV). There is also limited assistance to GBV survivors and other vulnerable refugees, including pregnant and breast feeding mothers.

Refugee women and girls lack information about their options, largely due to inadequate access to legal information and counsel. In addition, the Greek asylum system is criticised for failing to meaningfully facilitate access to legal protection. GBV survivors are unlikely to have registration papers at hand when fleeing abusers, even if they would still be valid. Lacking these, it is extremely difficult to access critical services or transfer to a shelter.

The Women's Refugee Commission makes a number of recommendations, including ensuring that GBV survivors are able to access medical and psychosocial support, regardless of their legal documentation, and prioritizing maternal, new-born and reproductive health. The Commission also calls on the EU to 'do more to implement a coordinated, Europe-wide response to ensure protection for refugee women and girls'.

The findings of this report supports numerous other reports about safety conditions for refugee women and girls in Greece, and across the European migrant trail. Women's Asylum News has previously [reported](#) on difficulties facing women refugees on the move through Europe and in the [Calais 'jungle'](#), as well as how they are [disproportionately affected](#) by the EU-Turkey cooperation. [Amnesty International](#) has also collected evidence about the risk of assault facing women in these situations, often because of a lack of provision of basic necessities, including gender-segregated, private toilets.

Earlier this year, Asylum Aid contributed to a [resolution](#) of the EU Parliament calling on member states to implement key gender-sensitive protections for refugees.

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## Training and Events

### **Southbank Centre: Why women refugees are often unheard & unseen**

On Thursday 4 August 18:30-21:30 a FREE event showcasing the voices of refugee women is taking place at the Southbank Centre in London.

The event will include speakers from Women for Refugee Women and the London Refugee Women's Forum, and music by Syrian artist Maya Youssef

[More information](#)

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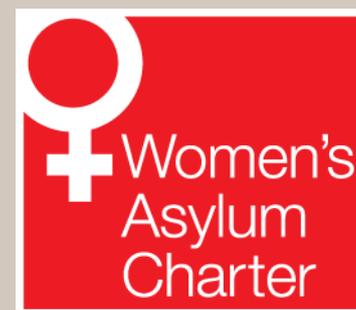
### **Rights of Women: Update on Legal Aid, FGM & Coercive Control**

There are still a few spaces available for service providers based in West and South London on Rights of Women's training on recent case law relevant to legal aid in domestic violence cases, changes to the law on FGM, and the new criminal offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in September.

[More information](#)

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# *Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum*



*Endorsements: 364*

*Google Group Membership: 180*

## **Charging vulnerable migrant women for maternity care**

Charging for NHS maternity care has harsh impacts on vulnerable migrant women. Women who are chargeable face costs of at least £4,000 for standard maternity care, with bills rising to over £8,000 for women who have caesareans.

Women are entitled to receive maternity care whether or not they can pay in advance. However, a debt to the NHS of £500 or more is taken into account by the Home Office when assessing immigration applications. In short, an unpaid debt for NHS maternity care can prevent a woman from regularising her status. Women are left to weigh up whether to risk their future immigration claims or to risk pregnancy and birth without NHS care.

NHS Trusts are expected to actively pursue repayment of a debt. There are currently no rules requiring Trusts to wait until after the birth to chase up unpaid invoices. For women without the funds to pay these debts, this is a source of stress and anxiety during their pregnancy.

The rules governing charging are complex. It is unsurprising that NHS staff without expert knowledge of the immigration system are making errors while assessing who is chargeable and who is not.

Asylum seeking women are exempt from charging, but it is not uncommon for these women to be wrongly asked to pay. Women whose asylum claim has been refused are not chargeable in Scotland. In England, only those refused asylum seekers who are in receipt of Home Office support are entitled to free care, leaving destitute refused asylum seekers facing bills they cannot pay.

Maternity Action has set up a new advice service to provide advice on charging for NHS maternity care. The Maternity Care Access Advice Service offers telephone and email advice on eligibility for free care, helps women to access care if they have been wrongly refused it, and helps those who are chargeable to negotiate with the NHS Trust. It is open to anyone seeking advice: women, their families, advisers and midwives are all welcome to get in contact.

The Service commenced in June so is not yet widely known. We are keen to promote the Service and to raise awareness about the practice of charging for NHS maternity care. Posters are available electronically and in hard copy. These are also available in laminated form which is required by some health services. If you can help promote the Service through your networks, please get in touch.

*Rosalind Bragg is the Director of Maternity Action*



maternity action

# Maternity Care Access Advice Service

Are you worried about being charged for NHS maternity care?

Have you been asked to pay for your maternity care?

Are you having difficulty getting a maternity appointment?

Have you been refused maternity care because you have to pay for it?

Are you a midwife or adviser and unsure about charging rules??

The Maternity Care Access Advice Service provides telephone and email advice and online information to help women get the maternity care they need, to advise women on whether they have to pay for their NHS maternity care and to help women to deal with problems relating to charging.

We provide advice to women, their friends and family, midwives, other health professionals, advice workers and community workers.

We assist women from abroad, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, EU and EEA nationals and UK citizens.

All calls are free of charge. We provide telephone interpreting. The service is confidential. We will not share your information with any other organisation or Government agency without your permission.



LOTTERY FUNDED

#### Advice line

0808 800 0041 (Freephone) Thursdays 10am-12noon only

Email advice [maternitycareaccess@maternityaction.org.uk](mailto:maternitycareaccess@maternityaction.org.uk)

#### Online information

[www.maternityaction.org.uk/maternitycareaccess](http://www.maternityaction.org.uk/maternitycareaccess)

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