

**EMBARGO: 00.01, WEDNESDAY 14 MAY 2008**

**THE DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES MEMORIAL FUND AWARDS GRANT TO  
END THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN IN THE UK**

The Children's Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees have been awarded funding from The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund to work together to end the immigration detention of children in the UK within three years.

The grant of £1,250,000 enables The Children's Society, Bail for Immigration Detainees and The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund to build upon the work of those groups and organisations that have been campaigning independently to bring an end to the detention of children. The charities believe that it is never acceptable to detain children and that seeking asylum is a human right enshrined in international law.

Lisa Nandy, Policy Adviser at The Children's Society says;

“Our work with refugee children fuels our growing concerns about their safety and welfare when held in detention. It is never acceptable to deprive a child of their liberty or separate them from their parents simply because they have sought asylum in the UK. By working with Bail for Immigration Detainees and the other very committed volunteers and charities who stand by these children, we aim to put an end to the detention of refugee children.”

The UK detains an estimated 2,000<sup>1</sup> children a year for the purposes of immigration control. This is the only group of children who can be locked up without time limit and with no judicial oversight for administrative purposes<sup>2</sup>.

The charities are particularly concerned about the limited information available on the number of children in detention, practices in detention centres and an apparent lack of accountability for detained children at a policy and practice level.

The Children's Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees will deliver practical, emotional and legal support to families in detention – helping secure their release

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<sup>1</sup> Crawley, H. (2005) p.7 *No place for a Child*, Save the Children

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR (2000) *Reception Standards for Asylum Seekers in the European Union*

and providing support to families coping with the impact of detention. The grant will also build an evidence base to challenge the use of child detention and to make a clear case for change to government and the wider public.

Amanda Shah, Assistant Director – Policy at Bail for Immigration Detainees says;  
“We are delighted that The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund is supporting us to expand our existing work with families and to resource a campaign against the detention of child migrants and asylum seekers. We look forward to working with The Children’s Society and many other groups to bring an end to this national scandal.”

The charities will seek to emphasise that the welfare of children must be a priority when deciding to detain a family. The reality for most children in the immigration system is that their welfare is protected by lesser safeguards than other children in the UK.

David Farnsworth, Head of Refugee & Asylum Seekers Initiative at The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund says;

“All children have a right to be brought up in a safe, dignified environment. The development, happiness and well being of those children caught up within the immigration system is being threatened by detention. We’re making this significant grant – the largest ever in our Refugee and Asylum Seekers Initiative - to The Children’s Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees to uphold and champion the rights of vulnerable children being kept in detention in Britain.”

**Ends.**

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**Notes to editors**

- The Children's Society is driven by the belief that every child deserves a good childhood. It provides vital help and understanding for those forgotten children who face the greatest danger, discrimination or disadvantage; children who are unable to find the support they need anywhere else. Visit [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)
- Bail for Immigration Detainees is a human rights charity challenging immigration detention in the UK. It provides free legal advice to detained asylum seekers and migrants to help them secure their release and it campaigns to end arbitrary detention. Visit [www.biduk.org](http://www.biduk.org)
- The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund continues the Princess's humanitarian work in the UK and overseas. By giving grants to organisations, championing charitable causes, advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising, the Fund works to secure

sustainable improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable people in the UK and around the world.

- The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund has given approximately £7 million to organisations working with young refugees and asylum seekers since it was established in September 1997. Ten years after the Princess's death, the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Initiative was set up with a core focus of ensuring that the UK's treatment of children seeking asylum meets international standards on children's rights. Visit [www.theworkcontinues.org.uk](http://www.theworkcontinues.org.uk)