



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees
All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Rule of Law

The APPGs for Refugees, and the Rule of Law, are delighted to invite you to a public panel discussion:

Droughts and Deserts:

A report on the immigration legal aid market and access to justice

Date & Time: Wednesday 26 June 2019, 18:00 – 20:00

Location: Committee Room 15, Houses of Parliament

Speakers:

- **Thangam Debbonaire MP**, Chair of the APPG on Refugees (Chair)
- **Dr Jo Wilding**, Author of the report and barrister at Garden Court Chambers
- **A person with lived experience**, recalling their experience of legal aid and the asylum process

Spaces are limited so please to **RSVP** by seb.klier@refugeecouncil.org.uk and kama.petruczenko@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Background:

Dr Jo Wilding's new report is based on a three-year review of the provision of legal aid for immigration casework. It analyses the effectiveness, demand and supply, access to quality legal advice and representation of the asylum and immigration legal services.

This event will focus on the parts of the report related to asylum law. It is in the public interest for the system to run effectively, provide a high level of quality advice and representation and comply with international human rights standards.

The aim of legal aid reforms should be to create a more positive, more effective immigration legal aid system, and ensure access to justice, especially for groups of people who are vulnerable and in need of protection.

The government's recent review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing, and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) had very little to say about how the system interacts with immigration casework, and yet many questions remain:

- Why are many low-quality providers able to operate and increase their presence in the market?
- How does Home Office decision-making affect the ability of the legal aid market to function?

- Does the distribution of legal aid contracts meet levels of demand and supply, especially in context of asylum dispersal?
- Does the current fee structure allow for proper representation?

Dr Jo Wilding will present her findings, with responses from panel members, including a person who claimed asylum in the UK and who will share their experience of legal aid and the asylum system, with opportunity for discussion and questions to follow.