

BRIEFING

STATELESS PEOPLE IN THE UK: AT RISK OF LEGAL LIMBO, IN NEED OF PROTECTION

JANUARY 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stateless people are not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its laws, and many have no right to live in any other country. The protection of stateless people living in the UK is an obligation under two post Second World War UN Conventions which the UK has agreed to implement¹ and in 2013 the UK government introduced a statelessness determination procedure through which stateless people can gain recognition and regularise their status. However, protection continues to fall short both because stateless people face barriers to recognition, and because protections for those recognised are insufficient. Some recent changes have further reduced protection.

Many people in British communities right across the UK are stateless or at risk of statelessness. Most are migrants, who are often forcibly displaced and some are children born in the UK to non-British parents. They are left in legal limbo, vulnerable to discrimination, poverty, and exploitation.² They cannot work and are often denied access to essential services, including healthcare. While many of these issues overlap with those faced by others without immigration status, stateless people without a right to reside in any country face distinctive problems in resolving their status. Neither the 1954 nor 1961 Statelessness Conventions have been fully incorporated into domestic law which feeds into key policy and legal problems that create barriers to stateless people accessing protection and rights. These include:

- **Problems with the statelessness determination procedure:** Statelessness is inherently difficult to prove, and wrongly refusing someone recognition and the status that entails has grave consequences. Nonetheless, the current determination procedure contains excessive barriers to recognition, and has too few safeguards on decision-making. There is no right of appeal, and applicants are refused without interview and can be refused permission to stay on grounds which apply to non-stateless migration routes. All of this contributes to years of delays in decision-making for stateless people.
- **Poor access to legal advice:** Stateless people face huge barriers to accessing legal advice. In England and Wales, statelessness is not in scope for legal aid. However, even across jurisdictions where it is in scope, as it is in Scotland, there exists a UK-

¹ [1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons](#); the [1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness](#).

² JRS UK, [Destitute and in Danger: people made homeless by the asylum system](#) (September 2024). The European Network on statelessness has relatedly highlighted that stateless people, and those at risk of statelessness, including children, are disproportionately at risk of being trafficked. [Europe's duty to protect stateless refugees - #StatelessJourneys](#).

wide crisis in legal aid provision, including poor rates of remuneration, complex bureaucracy and large advice deserts.

- **Detention:** Because they exist in legal limbo and are often unidentified, stateless people are at disproportionate risk of long and arbitrary detention, which compounds the limbo and uncertainty central to their lives. Immigration detention in the UK has no time limit, and relatively few procedural safeguards, and statelessness is often not considered in detention decisions, despite the obvious impact which having no nationality has on the likelihood of a stateless person being admitted to another country.
- **Limited access to family reunification:** Changes made to the Immigration Rules in January 2024 have made it significantly more onerous for stateless people to be joined by their family members.
- **Barriers to Citizenship:** Some children born in the UK to non-British parents are left at risk of statelessness because Home Office decision-makers have wide discretion to deny them citizenship.³ Further, citizenship fees are too expensive, sometimes prohibitively so, but there is no fee waiver for adults. The 1961 Convention does not permit any fees to be charged for children's citizenship applications, yet although fee waivers are available for children in principle, the process for obtaining a fee waiver for children is excessively onerous. This both places people at risk of statelessness, and prevents those recognised as stateless from finally accessing citizenship.

This all occurs within a hostile environment for daily life in the UK for people without residence rights, and more specifically in the context of the Hostile Environment agenda. That is, a matrix of policy and legislation which intentionally excludes people without immigration status, including those who are stateless, from civic, social and economic life."⁴ This includes restrictions on access to housing, employment, study, social security, bank accounts, driving licences and to travel or be joined by family.

There are clear steps which are urgently needed, and could be taken, to improve the situation.

³ Section 11, Nationality and Borders Act 2022 amends para 3 and 3A, Sch 2 British Nationality Act 1981.

⁴ This was subsequently rebranded 'The Compliant Environment', on which see Wendy Williams, [Windrush Lessons Learned Review](#), (March 2020) [accessed on 29 November 2024]. The policy agenda, aimed at making life in the UK unbearable for those without immigration status, continues to operate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the statelessness determination procedure:

- Introduce an automatic right of appeal of refusal of leave to remain.⁵
- Do not refuse statelessness cases without interview.⁶
- Ensure the burden of proof is shared between the applicant and the Home Office.⁷
- Lower the standard of proof in statelessness determination.⁸

Ensure access to legal advice:

- Statelessness should be in scope for automatic legal aid across all UK jurisdictions.⁹
- Take urgent steps to address the crisis of immigration and asylum legal aid. Legal aid must be sufficiently remunerated to ensure it is practically accessible and effective.

Protect stateless people from detention:

Immigration detention is profoundly damaging to mental health. In our view, detention should not be used to manage immigration. However, as long as immigration detention continues to exist:

- Ensure stateless people and those at risk of statelessness without a right of entry to another country are not detained. To minimise the use of detention, never detain anyone unless their right of entry to another country is clearly established. Some people, including children, survivors of torture and trafficking and others who are disproportionately likely to suffer significant harm in detention, should never be detained.
- In the interim ensure statelessness is considered as relevant in decisions to detain and that there are mechanisms for identifying statelessness in detention and decisions to detain.¹⁰
- Place a time limit of no more than 28 days on immigration detention.
- Ensure the decision to detain goes before a judge and is periodically reviewed.

⁵ [Section 84, Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#) [accessed 10 November 2024].

⁶ [Appendix Statelessness](#), brought in by [HC 246 – Statement of changes in Immigration Rules](#) of 7 December 2023 [accessed 10 November 2024] Caseworker guidance is [here](#) (link updates to latest version, [accessed 10 November 2024]).

⁷ [Appendix Statelessness](#), brought in by [HC 246 – Statement of changes in Immigration Rules](#) of 7 December 2023 [accessed 10 November 2024] Caseworker guidance is [here](#) (link updates to latest version, [accessed 10 November 2024]).

⁸ [Appendix Statelessness](#), brought in by [HC 246 – Statement of changes in Immigration Rules](#) of 7 December 2023 [accessed 10 November 2024] Caseworker guidance is [here](#) (link updates to latest version, [accessed 10 November 2024]).

⁹ [Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Act 2012, Sch 1, para 30](#), applicable to England and Wales only [accessed 10 November 2024] [UNHCR Report 'I am Human' 26 Apr 2021](#) [accessed 10 November 2024].

¹⁰ Guidance to caseworkers and policy documents on detention do not mention statelessness.

Facilitate family reunification:

- Fully restore family reunion rights for stateless people.¹¹

Remove barriers to citizenship:

- Reverse changes made by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 to ensure all children born in the UK can access a nationality at birth.¹²
- Abolish fees for British citizenship applications.
- For as long as fees exist, ensure a fee waiver is easily available so that cost is never a barrier to citizenship, or recognition of citizenship, for those who do not have an entitlement to another nationality.

Supporting frameworks for change:

- Provide adequate resources to implement the recommendations effectively and facilitate engagement with donors, encouraging multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- Ensure meaningful engagement with people with lived experience of statelessness and representatives of affected communities at every stage of implementing the recommendations and provide adequate resources and support to enable their full contribution.

¹¹ Removal of special family reunion Rules particular to stateless sponsors by [Appendix Statelessness](#) on 31 January 2024, which replaced Part 14 of the Immigration Rules- Only available in the national [archive](#): [accessed 10 November 2024].

¹² [Section 11, Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#) amends [para 3 and 3A, Sch 2 British Nationality Act 1981](#) [accessed 10 November 2024].

INTRODUCTION: LEGAL LIMBO IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

People not recognised as citizens by any state exist in a legal limbo, excluded from social, economic, and civic life. If not recognised and given protection, in common with others without immigration documents, stateless people cannot work or access public funds, so are at risk of destitution, and vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and serious long-term deterioration of physical and mental health.¹³ They face barriers to accessing essential services, including healthcare, under Hostile Environment measures that place immigration control across different areas of daily life. Against this wider background, the causes of statelessness are complex, and intersect with a number of other issues, so it can take years for statelessness to be identified as the underlying problem, during which time individuals must wait in stasis and uncertainty.

The exact number of stateless people in the UK is difficult to determine, both because stateless people can spend so long unidentified, and because collection and analysis of data on statelessness is poor.¹⁴ According to the UK Statelessness Index, UNHCR analysis of UK government figures showed 5,483 stateless people in the UK as of 2022.¹⁵ Given that these were people who had come to the government's attention, the real figure is likely to be higher.

Many stateless people are also refugees, or otherwise forcibly displaced, and consequently many spend a long time navigating the asylum system, but being stateless makes this more difficult to do effectively. There is a pressing need to ensure that stateless people in the UK can access protection.¹⁶

JRS UK, Asylum Aid and Liverpool Law Clinic work with people refused asylum. Many are either stateless or at risk of statelessness. The fact that their nationality is unclear has often been a factor in them being refused asylum and being subjected to the Hostile Environment agenda instead of accessing protection.

PROBLEMS WITH THE STATELESSNESS DETERMINATION PROCEDURE

In 2013, the UK government took the positive step of introducing a statelessness determination procedure, through which stateless people can gain formal recognition and regularise their status in the UK. However, there are significant problems with this procedure. Proving one is stateless entails proving a negative – that one is *not* recognised as a national by any state - which is inherently difficult. For example, applicants typically need to show they have visited an embassy and requested recognition of nationality, but embassies often refuse entry to those they do not recognise as nationals, so stateless

¹³ JRS UK, [Destitute and in Danger: people made homeless by the asylum system](#) (September 2024). The European Network on statelessness has relatedly highlighted that stateless people, and those at risk of statelessness, including children, are disproportionately at risk of being trafficked. [Europe's duty to protect stateless refugees - #StatelessJourneys](#).

¹⁴ "Statelessness Population Data", [Stateless Index on the United Kingdom](#) (updated February 2023).

¹⁵ "Statelessness Population Data", [Stateless Index on the United Kingdom](#) (updated February 2023).

¹⁶ For an international and European perspective on the obligation of States to protect stateless people, uphold children's right to a nationality and birth registration, implement effective and accessible routes to regularisation, and prevent the arbitrary denial of nationality, see ENS and The AIRE Centre, ["Legal briefing: Statelessness and the right to respect for family and private life"](#) (2024).

people face a circular problem. Against this background, the statelessness determination procedure has too few safeguards against erroneous refusals and excessive barriers to proving statelessness. Key issues include:

Asylum Aid's client, Ali, was born in Iran.¹⁷ Ali's Iranian mother and Afghani father could not have an official marriage as his father had entered Iran illegally. The law in Iran at the time of Ali's birth did not allow a child to be registered solely by their mother without a marriage certificate. The only identity document Ali had was a card that identified him, in the eyes of Iranian authorities, as an Afghan national with temporary residency status in Tehran. He was expelled from university and often told to "go back to his country". But he had no other country to go back to. He could not get Afghan identity documents as his father had left the family home when he was five, and Ali did not know where he was.

As is the case with many stateless people, discriminatory nationality laws made it impossible for Ali to be accepted in his native country. Ali had no future in Iran because he was not recognised as a citizen, and in 2011 he left. He made asylum claims in the UK on the basis of this discrimination but was unsuccessful as this discrimination did not reach the level of persecution required to qualify as a refugee under the UK's asylum process. His initial claim was made in 2011, prior to the establishment of a Statelessness Determination Procedure in the UK. Ali came to Asylum Aid for advice in 2020 and working with our pro bono legal partners, Asylum Aid made further attempts with both the Iranian and Afghan embassies to establish Ali's right of admission to either country. Asylum Aid was able to instruct an expert on Iranian law and practice to confirm Ali's account. He tried to trace his father, but was unable to do so.

Ali's application to be recognised as stateless was submitted in 2021. After Asylum Aid repeatedly contacted the Home Office for updates on his case, Ali was finally granted statelessness leave to remain in 2023. He had been in the UK for 12 years with no right to work or move on with his life. He is now able to do so and is currently on an Access to Higher Education course so that he can finally enter university.

Ali says: *"I sometimes still don't believe that I finally got the status and can do all of this. 12 years of waiting for the status and not being able to do anything was such a long time that all this feels surreal now. I'm really happy that I can finally work, study, travel, and live a normal life, thanks to Asylum Aid."*

- **There is no right of appeal** to the courts for people refused recognition as stateless.¹⁸ For context, in asylum decision-making, around half of cases refused by the Home Office are granted on appeal to the courts – 48% in the year ending June

¹⁷ "Ali" is a pseudonym used to protect this individual's identity.

¹⁸ There is an internal administrative review process, but its scope is limited, there is no independent oversight, and a tiny fraction are upheld. A UNHCR audit observed "In all cases where an AR [administrative review] was undertaken, the original decision to refuse the application was maintained and in only one case was a case working error identified correctly by the decision-maker." See UNHCR, *Statelessness Determination in the UK: a UNHCR audit of the Home Office approach to decision-making in the Statelessness Determination Procedure* (2020), p.8.

2024.¹⁹ This suggests that there may be a large proportion of erroneous refusals going unchallenged in statelessness decision-making because there is no right of appeal.

- **Refusals without interviews.** Statelessness applicants are almost never invited to interview.²⁰ Not interviewing can be positive where decision-makers are able to make a positive decision on the papers, as it reduces delays and unnecessary work, and avoids burdening the applicant. However, where decision-makers are minded to refuse, interviews provide a crucial opportunity for applicants to explain their situation and address issues shaping the decision-maker's reasoning. Statelessness applications should not be refused without interview.
- **The burden of proof is placed unfairly on the applicant.** Applicants are often poorly placed to take the necessary steps to provide proof. UNHCR recommends that the burden of proof should be shared between the applicant and the Home Office and Home Office states that decision-makers "should consider whether officials are more likely to receive a response, particularly if the state has previously demonstrated their cooperation with the Home Office"²¹ apparently acknowledging that a shared burden of proof is more practical. This should be fully reflected in guidance and practice.²²
- **There is an unduly high threshold of proof.** Applicants must prove they are stateless 'on the balance of probabilities' – i.e., they need to prove that it's more likely than not that they are stateless. This is an unrealistic threshold, and also not proportionate to the consequences of wrongly refusing applicants. By contrast, the UNHCR recommends that the standard of proof should be 'reasonable degree of likelihood'.²³
- **Delays.** There is no defined timeframe for how long someone must wait for a decision on statelessness determination. Many stateless people wait in limbo for years, during which time they may be completely destitute, and otherwise are reliant on Section 4 asylum support,²⁴ under which people struggle to meet basic needs. Applicants can wait 1-2 years for a first decision, and another year if a refusal is challenged.

All of this makes it harder for stateless people to access protection they badly need, and often also means they must spend extended periods destitute and/or relying on government support to survive while they navigate the statelessness procedure.

¹⁹ Home Office statistics, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

²⁰ See UNHCR, *Statelessness Determination in the UK: a UNHCR audit of the Home Office approach to decision-making in the Statelessness Determination Procedure* (2020), p.54: of 530 cases provided to the UNHCR, in only 10 - less than 2% - had interviews been conducted.

²¹ [Permission to stay as a stateless person: caseworker guidance \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²² UNHCR [Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons](#), pp.4-5.

²³ UNHCR [Handbook on Protection of Stateless Persons](#), pp.4-5.

²⁴ [Section 4, Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#), provides a minimum level of hardship support for people refused asylum who are unable to leave the UK for defined reasons. Caseworker guidance is [here](#).

Liverpool Law Clinic took on a stateless applicant from a recognised stateless community, and his stateless children. Their applications were outstanding for 3 years and 3 months, during which time they had to endure limbo and uncertainty.

A stateless man from a known stateless group had lived in the UK for decades when he was told he was going to be deported. He had to first request recognition as stateless, and then prove that he was not removable, even though nearly all of the time he had been in the UK was documented. The Home Office took almost 3 years to decide to grant a form of visa to him. Officials said that they had been working on his case during this time. However, after Liverpool Law Clinic gained access to his file, it was clear that no substantive action had been taken on it, except a grant decision 'made in error' and withdrawn again over a year before the final grant. The Home Office had repeatedly stated it would take a decision soon and had to apologise for inconvenience and delay.

POOR ACCESS TO LEGAL ADVICE

Without legal advice, it is virtually impossible to navigate statelessness procedures, or otherwise resolve one's status where one is at risk of statelessness, but stateless people and those at risk of statelessness have huge difficulty securing adequate legal advice. Firstly, there is a crisis of non-availability of immigration and asylum legal advice across the UK jurisdictions. Years of neglect by administrations in England, Wales and Scotland mean that the pool of legal aid lawyers is shrinking, and the inherent complexity of many statelessness cases is an additional disincentive for existing advisors to take them on.²⁵ Secondly, compounding this wider problem in England and Wales, statelessness cases are out of scope for legal aid, so advisors funded by legal aid must apply for 'Exceptional Case Funding' [ECF] to get paid for statelessness cases. This is time-consuming, and some legal aid providers are reluctant to take on cases requiring ECF, especially as they are already overstretched and having to turn down other cases.²⁶ Taken as a whole, inability to access good legal advice hugely compounds problems with the statelessness determination procedure.

DETENTION

*"Detention made my mental health worse. It started when I got into immigration detention. There they do not care if you cry. Immigration detention is far far worse than prison because there is no time limit."*²⁷

²⁵ Joint Briefing from 71 organisations, "[Securing access to justice](#): the need for legal aid in immigration" (September 2024). See further Refugee Action and NAACOM, *Tipping the Scales: Access to justice in the asylum system* (2018), Jo Wilding, *Droughts and Deserts: A report on the immigration legal aid market*. (2019), Jo Wilding, *A Huge Gulf: Demand and Supply for Immigration Legal Advice in London* (2021).

²⁶ Public Law Project: [How to get Exceptional Case Funding for immigration cases | Public Law Project](#) and [Lord Chancellor faces legal challenge over legal aid crisis - Public Law Project](#). Consultation on uplift of 10% in legal aid rates, frozen since 1996, will not affect the problem of accessing advice on statelessness: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/historic-increase-in-legal-aid-to-support-most-vulnerable?mc_cid=13aac8d883&mc_eid=01b6cf2341.

²⁷ European Network on Statelessness [Protecting Stateless Persons From Arbitrary Detention](#) (2016). At the time of writing, the law is unchanged as it affects stateless people in detention.

Stateless people and those at risk of statelessness are disproportionately at risk of arbitrary and long detention under immigration powers because they exist in legal limbo.²⁸ In most cases stateless people cannot be removed so detaining them serves no purpose, but is likely to be prolonged because of misunderstanding about their status.²⁹ Decision-makers, wrongly, often do not consider statelessness to be relevant to the decision to detain.³⁰ The UK has no time limit on immigration detention, and the decision to detain is purely administrative, not going before a judge, so there is in general a high risk of procedural unfairness around detention. Detention then obstructs access to asylum and immigration procedures.³¹ Detention is extremely traumatic and has a serious long-term impact on mental health; torture survivors regularly compare it to a second torture.³² Long and indefinite detention is especially harmful.³³ Stateless people already endure profound uncertainty. In indefinite immigration detention, they face a double limbo. Numerous experts have called for a time limit on detention, including the Brook House Inquiry, which recommended a 28-day time limit.³⁴

BARRIERS TO FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In January 2024, the Home Office changed the Immigration Rules to make family reunion significantly harder for stateless people who are granted leave under the statelessness leave to remain procedure. These changes mean that stateless people's partners and children have to meet the exacting financial and evidential requirements applied to the family members of British citizens – or meet a stringent 'exceptional circumstances' test - if they want to join or remain with them in the UK, as well as paying high application fees (or applying for a fee waiver), and there is no recognition of the particular difficulties stateless families are likely to face in doing so. The previous rules facilitated family reunion for stateless families and should be restored.³⁵

BARRIERS TO CITIZENSHIP

- **Citizenship is too expensive:** Fees for naturalising as a British citizen are prohibitively expensive for some people and no fee waiver is available for adults; currently the rate is £1,630 for an adult. This makes it more difficult for people recognised as stateless to naturalise, and places some people born in the UK at risk of statelessness. No one should ever be priced out of citizenship and under international law the UK has a specific duty to facilitate naturalisation for stateless people. Fee waivers are available for children, but the application process is

²⁸ European Network on Statelessness [Protecting Stateless Persons From Arbitrary Detention](#) (2016).

²⁹ European Network on Statelessness [Protecting Stateless Persons From Arbitrary Detention](#) (2016): "The risk of lengthy detention is exacerbated for stateless persons or those at risk of statelessness, particularly when the detaining authorities have failed to identify them as such and engage in futile (and often repeated) efforts to obtain proof of their nationality to secure their removal."

³⁰ European Network on Statelessness, Statelessness Index: [United Kingdom Country Briefing](#) (August 2020).

³¹ JRS Europe, [Detained and Unprotected: Access to justice and legal aid in immigration detention across Europe](#) (July 2024).

³² E.g. JRS UK, [Detained and Dehumanised: the impact of immigration detention](#) (2020), pp.19-20; Medical Justice, [The Second Torture: the immigration detention of torture survivors](#) (2012).

³³ JRS UK, [Detained and Dehumanised: the impact of immigration detention](#) (2020).

³⁴ The [Brook House Inquiry](#) Report: a public inquiry into the mistreatment of individuals detained at Brook House immigration removal centre (September 2023), recommendation 7.

³⁵ Asylum Aid has been given permission to bring a legal challenge to the Rule change which will be heard by the High Court from 21-23 January 2025.

excessively onerous. In general, fee waiver applications build more delays into a system in which vulnerable people have to wait for a long time, and constitute a further hurdle in an already complex system.³⁶ Abolishing fees for naturalising would be fairer, more efficient, and in line with Article 31 of the 1954 Convention, which requires facilitation of access to naturalisation for stateless persons.

- **Children at risk of statelessness.** Children born stateless in the UK face increased obstacles to registering as British. Children born in the UK to non-British parents are only deemed to have a right to British citizenship if they cannot acquire any other nationality, which can be very difficult to prove. However, the Nationality and Borders Act gives the government excessive discretion to decide whether a child born in the UK and applying for British citizenship on the basis they would otherwise be stateless has access to another nationality, placing children at increased risk of statelessness.³⁷ The number of stateless children born in the UK registering as British reduced markedly following the passage of the Nationality and Borders Act.³⁸

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In communities across the UK, stateless people and people at risk of statelessness are living in limbo, facing an uphill battle to resolve their status and unable to get on with their lives. This situation is cruel and destructive. There are important steps that could easily be taken to fix it.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



[Asylum Aid](#) provides specialist legal representation to people seeking protection in the UK, taking on some of the most complex cases, including stateless people. We were instrumental in the creation of the UK's Statelessness Determination Procedure and remain one of only a small number of providers of free specialist advice to people applying for leave to remain as stateless, representing around 25 people each year with the support of our innovative pro bono partnership with 11 corporate law firms. We are members of the European Network on Statelessness and host the UK Statelessness Forum, a Google group for the exchange of information, ideas and updates among UK practitioners in the statelessness sector.

The [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) works with refugees and forcibly displaced people, including stateless people, in over 50 countries worldwide. JRS in the UK (JRS UK) specifically works with people who have been refused asylum and are destitute, a significant number of whom are stateless or at risk of statelessness, and with people held in immigration

³⁶ This is JRS UK's experience from applying for fee waivers in other contexts.

³⁷ For analysis, see EU Network on Statelessness [briefing](#) on the Nationality and Borders Bill.

³⁸ Section 11, Nationality and Borders Act 2022. See footnote 3 and [Citizenship statistics](#) over the years, showing a reduction from around 2261 in the 18 months to the end of 2022, and 846 in the following 18 months.

detention. JRS UK provides practical support, casework, legal advice, accommodation and activities for destitute asylum seekers; detention outreach services to Heathrow Immigration Removal Centre, and post-detention support. JRS UK's legal team does significant work supporting stateless people to resolve their status.

[JustRight Scotland](#) was established in 2017 and uses the law to defend and extend people's rights across Scotland. They operate [four specialist centres](#) of legal practice, offering free, confidential advice, information, and representation to individuals facing barriers to justice. This includes women experiencing gender-based violence, migrants and refugees - particularly unaccompanied children - survivors of trafficking and exploitation, and those facing discrimination. Through their [Scottish Refugee & Migrant Centre](#), they address critical issues such as children's rights, women's rights, family reunion, and destitution. By working collaboratively with individuals and communities, they aim to transform broken systems, improve lives, and ensure access to justice for refugees, migrants, and those affected by statelessness. Committed to advocating for the rights of stateless individuals, they provide essential legal support and push for systemic changes to secure justice.

The [University of Liverpool Law Clinic](#) has been providing free representation for stateless people since 2013. Experienced solicitors work with students to advise applicants and prepare applications. Staff are members of the Home Office statelessness stakeholder group and the [European Network on Statelessness](#); they comment on draft policy; advocate for stateless people, and work as experts in international forums (UN Universal Periodic Review, Council of Europe, and at UNHCR events). They wrote '[Statelessness and Applications for leave to remain: a best practice guide](#)' (ILPA 2016), '[Statelessness in Practice](#)' in 2018, and update the UK section of the [Index on Statelessness](#).

The [European Network on Statelessness \(ENS\)](#) is a civil society alliance of NGOs, lawyers, academics, and other independent experts committed to addressing statelessness in Europe, with over 180 members in 41 European countries. ENS organises its work around three pillars – law and policy development, awareness-raising, and capacity-building. This briefing partially draws on information and analysis from the [Statelessness Index on the United Kingdom](#), maintained and developed by ENS and its members. The Index is an online comparative tool that assesses European countries' law, policy and practice on the protection of stateless people and the prevention and reduction of statelessness against international norms and good practice.

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