



Independent Family Returns

# Independent Family Returns Panel

Report 2016-18



## **Chair's Foreword**

Families with children who no longer have a legal right to remain in the UK, who have not chosen to depart voluntarily, and who face the prospect of a required or enforced return to their country of origin, face a number of potentially difficult and daunting issues.

It is the task of the Independent Family Returns Panel (IFRP) to support and challenge the Home Office in ensuring that the welfare and safeguarding needs of children and families in these circumstances are appropriately met, in line the duties arising from Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009. The provision of a family returns process which is humane has an impact on the capacity of families to make a successful and effective return.

This report gives an independent view of a multi-professional panel consisting of members who have significant leadership and management experience in their various fields, on how well the welfare and safeguarding needs of families in these circumstances are being catered for. The report also makes recommendations to the Home Office for continuing improvement in relation to this important issue.

Having been chair of the panel since May 2017, I now present my first report.

**Paul Greenhalgh**

**Chair, Independent Family Returns Panel**

## Summary of recommendations presented in this report

**Recommendation 1 - Late legal challenges.** The IFRP recommends that work should take place as soon as possible by relevant officers in the Home Office and also in the Ministry of Justice, to raise awareness with the Judiciary about the impact of upholding legal challenges where these may be designed to frustrate family returns.

**Recommendation 2 – Reducing the incidence of families absconding.** The IFRP recommends that the consideration and implementation of a range of strategies to reduce the incidence of absconding be completed as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 3 - Consistency of support from Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement teams to reduce the incidence of absconding.** The IFRP recommends that systems be developed to ensure that ICE teams are consistently able to support arrests at more than one location, where there is a high risk of families absconding.

**Recommendation 4 - The use of charter flights, in exceptional circumstances.** The IFRP recommends that, in exceptional circumstances with families who have been disruptive or who have threatened disruption, the Home Office should consider the use of charter flights to ensure the safe removal of the family.

**Recommendation 5 - Return support.** The IFRP recommends that the work to provide a meet and greet service for required and ensured returnees be followed through and implemented.

**Recommendation 6 - Holding children at ports.** The IFRP welcomes the review by the Office of the Children's Champion into the arrangements for holding children at ports and recommends that the Home Office gives careful consideration to implementing the recommendations.

**Recommendation 7 – Data on the holding of children at ports.** The IFRP recommends that a nationally consistent approach be implemented urgently and as a matter of priority, across contractor and Border Force facilities, to the collation/management of data on the holding times of children in ports.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Independent Family Returns Panel (IFRP) provides advice to the Home Office on the safeguarding and welfare needs of families with children who face an ensured return to their country of origin, as part of the family returns process. This enables the Home Office to ensure that the welfare and safeguarding needs of such families are appropriately catered for. The formal remit of the IFRP is given below. The panel comprises professionals with a range of relevant expertise across the professions of social care, education, police, medical doctors and psychiatry.
- 1.2 The Family Returns process encourages families who are at the end of their legal rights to remain in the UK, to return to their countries of origin voluntarily, and it continues to be the case that a significantly greater proportion of families choose this route. Where families fail to return voluntarily, they are required to return to their country of origin, and are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own self-check-in arrangements at the airport. Families who fail to depart in this way are subject to an enforced return, which requires that the family be arrested and be subject to escorted travel arrangements both to the appropriate airport and during the flight. It is with required and enforced returns that the IFRP is concerned.
- 1.3 At the stage when the IFRP is consulted, the relevant Family Engagement Manager will have conducted at least two meetings with the family, will have sought relevant information from partner agencies, and will have developed detailed proposals for the return of the family. The detailed plans which are proposed by the Family Engagement Manager are put to the panel for its consideration and advice.
- 1.4 The report of the IFRP seeks to provide an independent view of the functioning of required and enforced family returns. The previous IFRP covered the period 2014-6. This report covers the period April 2016 to March 2018. It provides a data overview and commentary of the high-level trends in the reporting period, provides a summary of visits undertaken by IFRP members, evaluates the impact of the panel, and summarises the strengths of the current processes undertaken by the Home Office, from a safeguarding and welfare perspective. It makes recommendations to the Home Office for making the work more effective. A summary of the Home Office response to recommendations made in the previous IFRP report is also provided.
- 1.5 A new chair and two additional IFRP members were appointed with effect from May 2017; the other eight panel members have remained consistent across the reporting period. IFRP members attend meetings of the panel on a rotational basis (usually each meeting is attended by the chair and three panel members). IFRP members also come together on a quarterly basis with Home Office staff to ensure the broader issues relating to the panel are effectively managed.

## 2. The role and remit of the Independent Family Returns Panel

- 2.1 Following the Government announcement to end the detention of children for immigration purposes in December 2010, the IFRP was established in March 2011. The purpose of the Panel is to provide advice on the welfare and safeguarding aspects of the removal arrangements made for families who are no longer legally entitled to reside in the UK and have refused to depart voluntarily. The IFRP makes recommendations to the Home Office on the best method of returning individual families to their home country, ensuring the specific welfare needs of the children and family as a whole are met, where families have no right to remain in the UK and have not departed voluntarily or via a self-check process, and so become subject to an enforced return process. Section 54a of the Immigration Act 2014 requires the Secretary of State to consult the IFRP (a) in each family returns case, on how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children of the family, and (b) in each case

where the Secretary of State proposes to detain a family in pre-departure accommodation, on the suitability of so doing, having particular regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children of the family.

- 2.2 The panel has an additional, non-statutory role, relating to the occasional need to hold families with children at the border while enquiries are made as to whether they may be admitted and/or while they await a return flight. The family is held for the shortest possible time, usually in a holding room at the port of entry and where possible, families are held separately from other passengers. If a family is to be held overnight or for longer than 24 hours, they are normally removed to designated family accommodation in an immigration centre. The panel maintains an overview of the handling of families who are denied entry to the UK at the border, to ensure that detention in such cases is kept to a minimum.

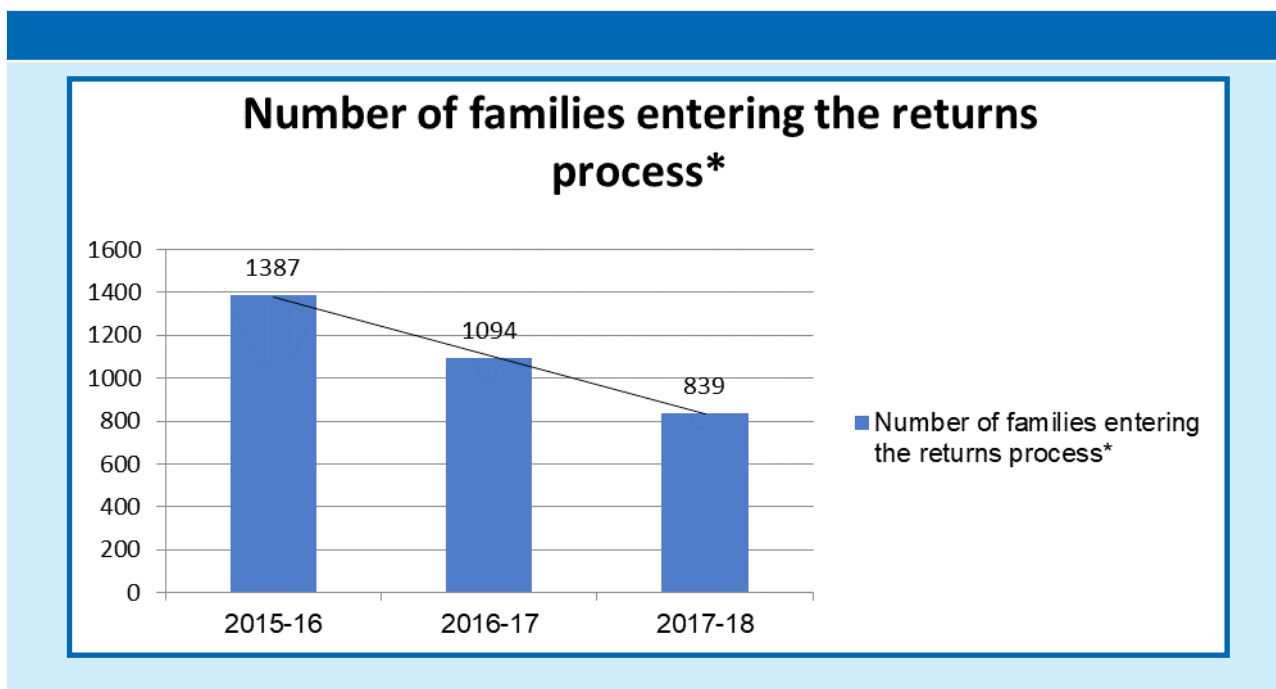
### 3 Family returns data and analysis

- 3.1 The data below shows that the number of families entering the family returns process has declined over the past three years. In each of the last three years, the vast majority of families have returned as voluntary departures, with a very small minority returning on the Assisted Voluntary Return scheme, and a very small proportion of families returning as required or ensured returnees. Only required and ensured returns are considered by the Independent Family Returns Panel, and referrals to the panel have declined at a rate broadly in line with the overall reduction in families entering the family returns process.

#### Families entering the family returns process

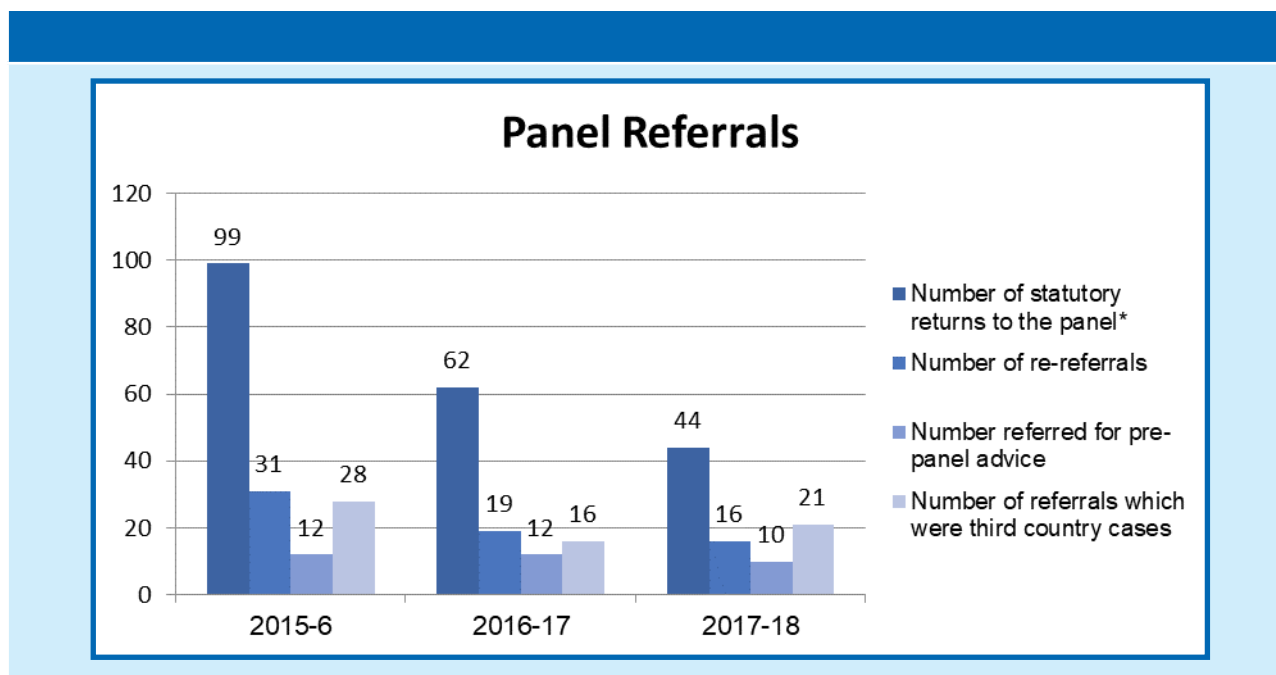
(\* refers to data that has previously been released under the Transparency Agenda).

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of families entering the returns process*	1387	1094	839



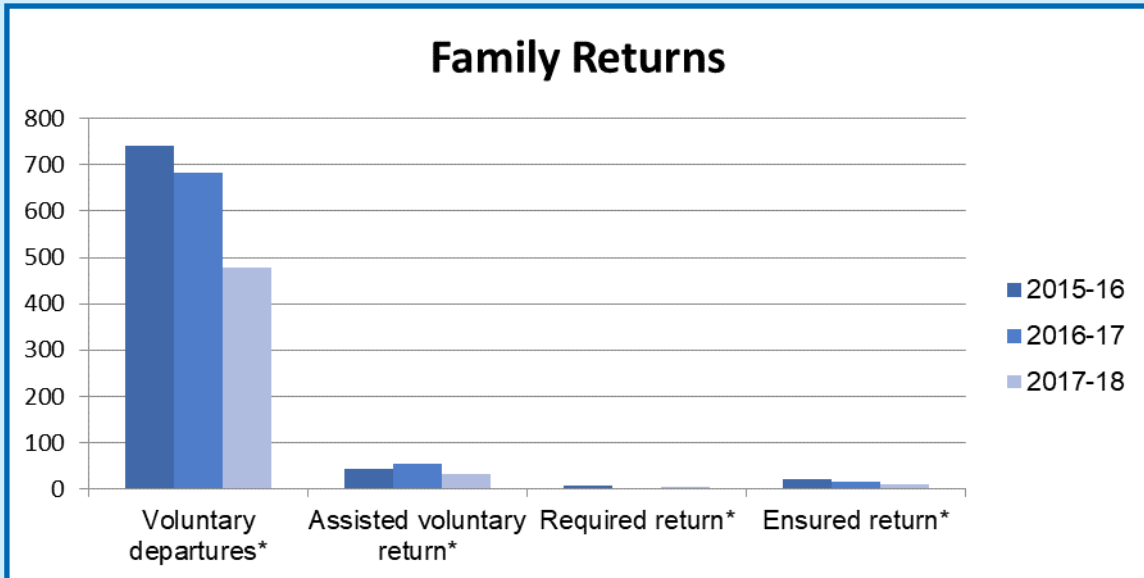
## Types of referral to the panel

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of statutory referrals to the panel*	99	62	44
Number of re-referrals	31	19	16
Number referred for pre-panel advice	12	12	10
Number of referrals which were third country cases	28	16	21



## Number of families who returned at different stages of the returns process\*

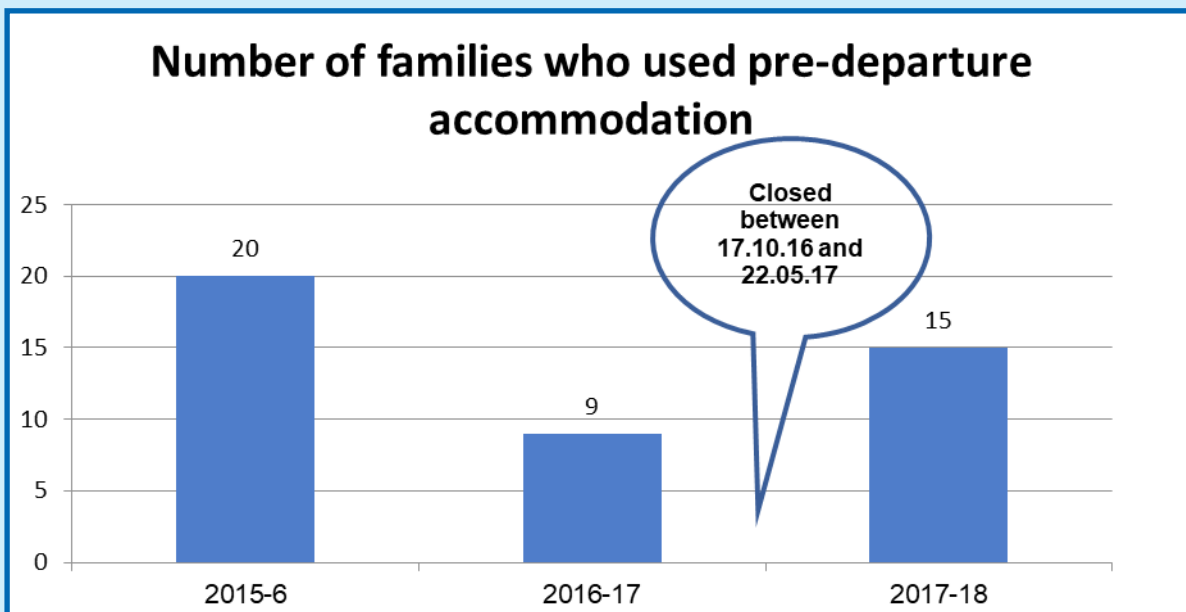
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Voluntary departures*	741	682	479
Assisted voluntary return*	42	55	33
Required return*	7	1	5
Ensured return*	22	15	11



#### Pre-departure accommodation usage

3.2 Use of Pre-Departure Accommodation (see paragraph 6.1 below) in the 2016-17 financial year was impacted by the closure of the existing facility and the opening of the new pre-departure facility. Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation closed on 17 October 2016. The new facility, Gatwick Pre-Departure Accommodation, opened on 22 May 2017. The low usage reflects the fact that Home Office guidance indicates that this provision should be used as part of the return plan as a last resort.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of families who used pre-departure accommodation	20	9	15

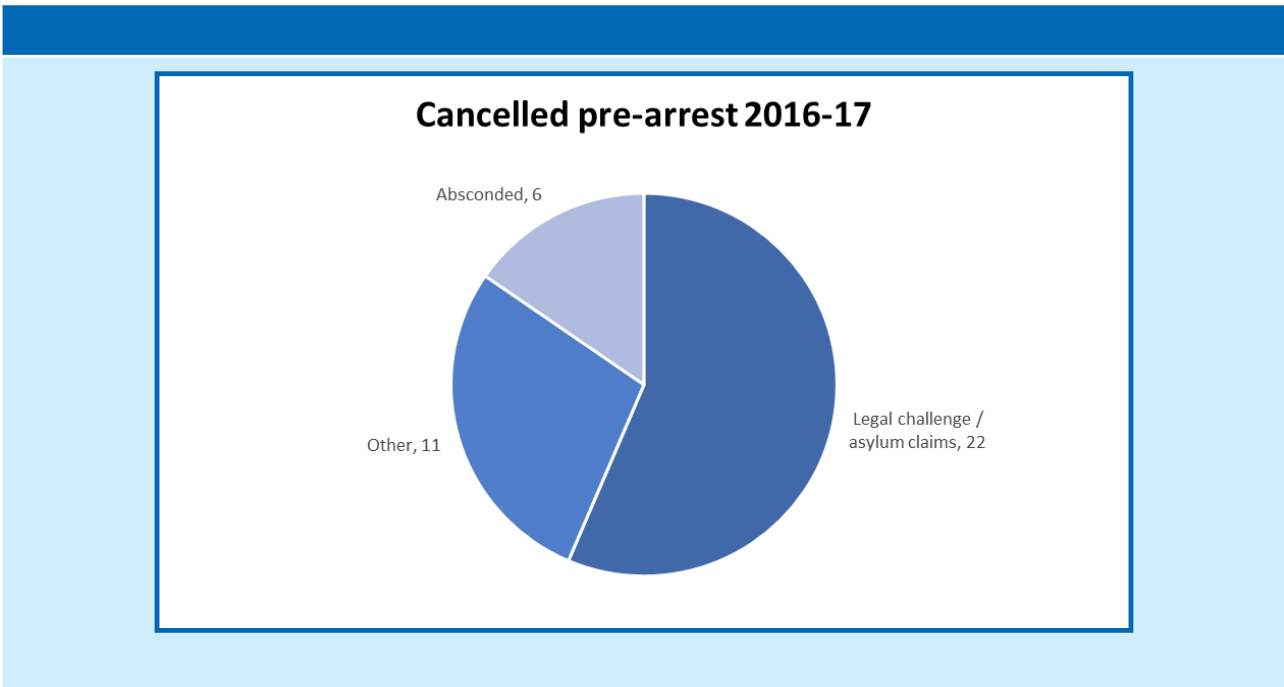
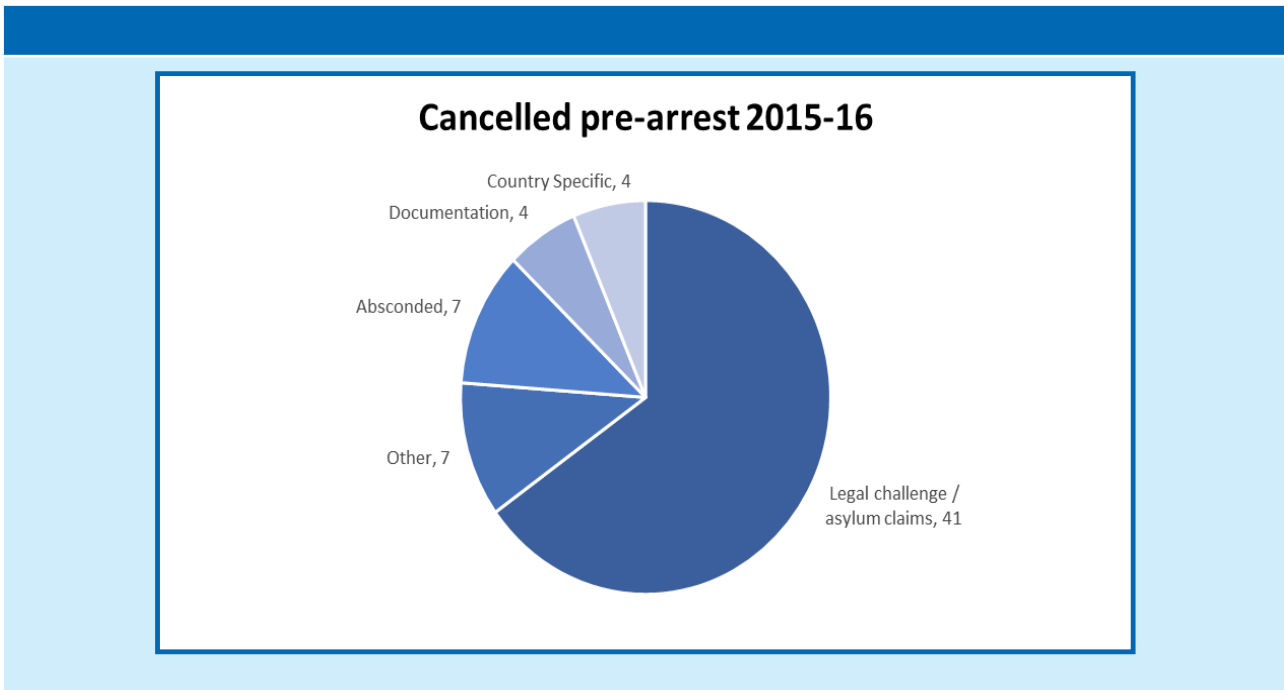




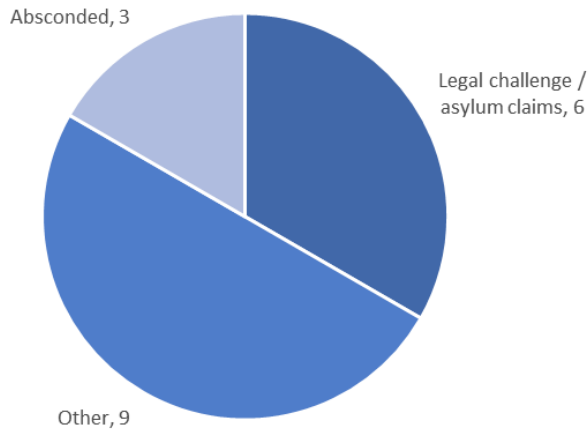
**Cancellations and failed returns – Cases considered by the Independent Family Returns Panel**

3.3 The data on cancelled returns, both pre- and post-arrest, is provided below. This shows the significance of legal representation at these points of the Family Returns process, as well as the prevalence of families absconding or not being present at home at the time of the arrest visit.

Pre-arrest visit cancellations and reasons	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of cases that were cancelled pre-arrest:	63	39	18
- legal representation/asylum claims	41	22	6
- absconded	7	6	3
- other (documentation, country specific, other misc.)	15	11	9

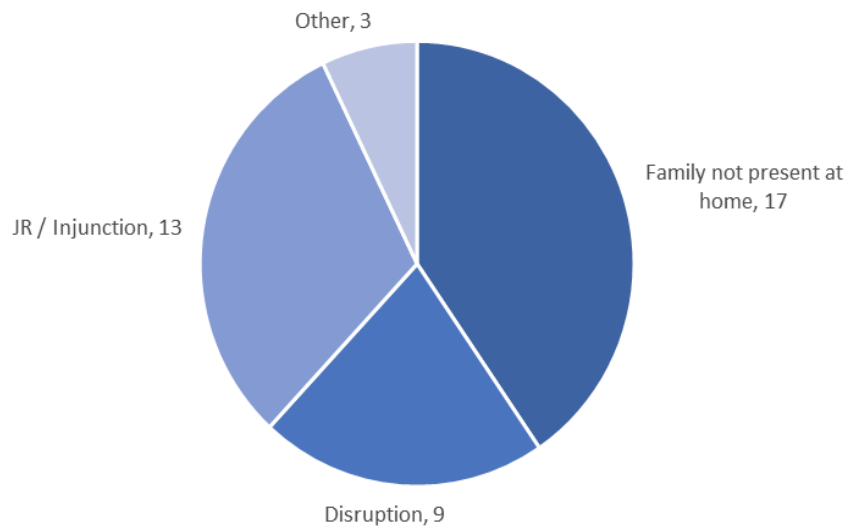


### Cancelled pre-arrest 2017-18

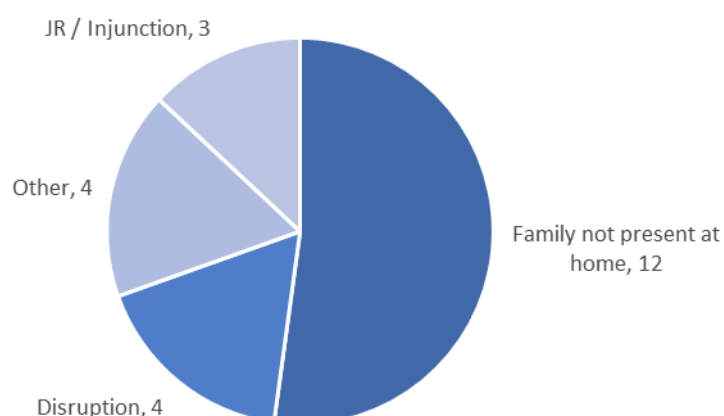


Post-arrest visit cancellations and reasons	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of cases cancelled post-arrest visit:	42	23	22
- family not present at home	17	12	6
- disruption at airport	9	4	2
- Judicial Review / Injunction	13	3	8
- other	3	4	6

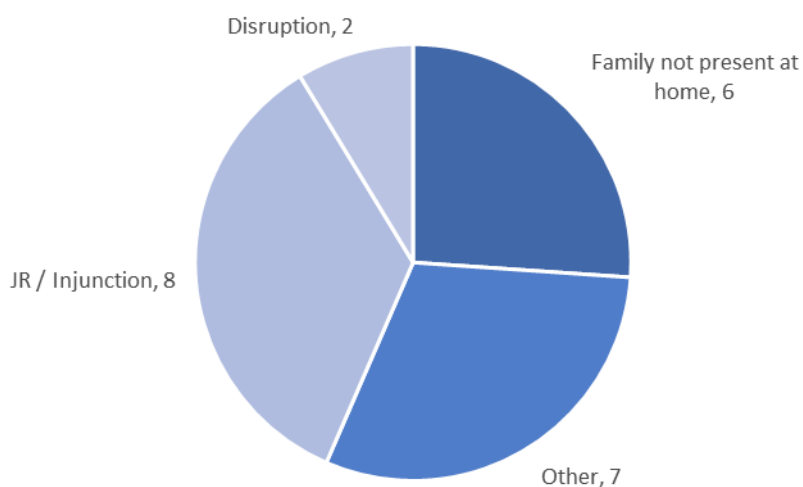
### Cancelled post-arrest 2015-16



### Cancelled post-arrest 2016-17



### Cancelled post-arrest 2017-18



## 4 Visits undertaken by IFRP members

- 4.1 Members of the IFRP undertake visits and observations of aspects of the family returns process to appreciate the operational realities and issues, so as to appropriately tailor their professional advice. Visits may also enable panel members to update their understanding and awareness of broader aspects of the immigration system. Panel members write up their visits and these reports are discussed at quarterly meetings. This enables the IFRP collectively build a body of evidence about the functioning of the Family Returns process. A list of visits made by panel members during the reporting period is provided at Appendix 1.

## 5. Impact of the IFRP

- 5.1 The impact of the IFRP may be considered in relation to three areas: the direct impact on cases considered by the panel; the impact the IFRP has on the wider family returns system and the international impact of the panel. These are considered in turn below.
- 5.2 In relation to the cases which it discusses, the IFRP has a direct impact through its assurance of the welfare and safeguarding aspects of plans devised by Home Office staff, and the additional advice that the panel provides about how the removal of the family, from a welfare and safeguarding point of view, may be best supported. In devising its advice, the panel takes account of the information provided by the Family Engagement Manager (who will usually have met with the family at least twice by the point of the panel discussion), and advice provided by other agencies working with the child. The latter includes reports from the children's schools (which are provided in a very high proportion of cases) and reports from children's social services, which indicate whether there has been any involvement with the family and if so the nature of this. In addition, if parental agreement has been given, medical representatives on the panel are given access to medical records of family members. After having read the family information and removal plans, IFRP members discuss the plans for the removal of the family with the Family Engagement Manager.
- 5.3 The considerations made by the IFRP include the following:
- Have all the welfare and safeguarding risks been appropriately identified? The nature of the discussion will depend on the context for each family but will always include whether welfare and safeguarding risks have been identified either through direct discussion by officers with families or through information made available by other agencies, particularly education, social care and health.
  - Whether the proposed return plan mitigates any identified welfare or safeguarding risks and ensures that the family's needs in relation to these are appropriately met.
  - Whether appropriate consideration has been given to the return support options for the family, once they arrive in the country of return, and that they have access to sufficient subsistence funding upon their immediate arrival.
- 5.4 The IFRP may also make recommendations for the safeguarding and welfare aspects of the plan to be further strengthened. The sort of recommendations made will vary from case to case. The following case study provides an example of the sort of recommendations that the panel may make.

### Case study: A third country case

The IFRP considered the case of a family who had arrived in the UK eight months previously, after initially claiming asylum in another European country. In line with international agreement regarding the consideration of asylum claims, the proposal was to return the family to the country in which they had initially claimed asylum. The family – including three teenage children – was very resistant to the idea of being returned to this other country to have their claim considered, claiming that they had been bullied and harassed when they were first there. One of the parents had mental health issues, was self-harming and was threatening suicide if they were returned to the other European country to have their claim considered.

The family had given permission for their medical records to be accessed and the doctors on the IFRP had access to these, and so noticed that the mother had confided to her GP that when she had previously been in the other European country she had been subject to sexual abuse by men from her own country of origin. Although the men had been sent to another camp, the mother stated that the family had been asked not to press charges. With access to this information, the IFRP supported the proposal that this family should spend up to 72 hours in Pre-Departure Accommodation (PDA) to support the family prior to their flight (the provision includes social work support) and contributed to the specification for this work. The panel requested that the PDA staff seek to work with the family to empower them by encouraging the mother to give permission for her British medical records to be made accessible to the authorities of the other European country to which the family was being returned, and to work with all the family on how they might manage perceived bullying and harassment.

- 5.5 The IFRP also has an impact on the wider family returns process. The fact that the welfare and safeguarding aspects of the return are generally well catered for in the vast majority of the proposed return plans suggests that these aspects of the return planning are now generally appropriately considered by Family Engagement Managers. Improvements in this regard over the years indicates that the presence of the IFRP has had a significant impact on practice in highlighting safeguarding and welfare issues, particularly for children, in the planning of family returns. The information given in Appendix 2, provides a summary of how recommendations made in the previous IFRP report have been taken up by the Home Office. A visit undertaken by an IFRP member to representatives of schools in Glasgow (see Appendix 1 for further background), had a significant impact in raising awareness of the importance of the provision of school reports for affected children at schools in Glasgow: since that visit schools in Glasgow have on almost all occasions provided reports for children who are to be subject to enforced return. In recent months, questions asked by IFRP members about return support and welfare issues upon arrival in the country of return has resulted in some helpful developments in return support that are acknowledged in 7.3 below.
- 5.6 The international response to the UK model of using an independent panel as part of the family removals process has been very positive. For example, the process has been commented upon positively in the UNICEF – Global Strategy 2015-19, by the International Detention Coalition and by the Council of Europe Committee of Refugees and Displaced Persons. UNHCR acknowledged that ‘The United Kingdom’s Independent Family Returns Panel, which assists the Home Office in taking decisions in the child’s best interest during the removal process, minimizes the need for enforcement action involving detention’ (Evidence to the Home Office Affairs Select Committee’s inquiry into Brook House Immigration Removal Centre, October 2017). Detention Action acknowledged that ‘the process allows more families with children facing return to remain in the community, instead of routinely being detained’ (‘Without Detention: Opportunities for Alternatives’, 2016).

## 6. Strengths of current process

- 6.1 The continuing trend of a large proportion of families accepting voluntary return is to be welcomed. It is highly likely that where families choose this route, the welfare and safeguarding needs of the children are more effectively assured. However, in the return of families who fail to depart voluntarily, a number of examples of effective practice are given below:
- Family Engagement Managers and Officers show a good degree of awareness of safeguarding and welfare issues and the vast majority of proposed return plans take due account of these issues.
  - Other agencies engage well with the process, and this means that IFRP discussions are informed by comprehensive information about the families – medical (subject to the family’s agreement and provided to medical members of the panel only), education and social care. This enables IFRP members to shape their advice effectively.
  - Family Engagement Managers also appear to be working in greater tandem with the Immigration Compliance and Enforcement teams, which are responsible for undertaking the family arrests of those being returned through the enforced route.
  - The cases of families being returned to a third country to have their asylum case heard (under Article 13.1 of the Dublin regulation) are coming through earlier for consideration by the IFRP. This helpfully provides an opportunity, if necessary, for further work mitigate welfare and safeguarding risks, prior to the deadline for return.
  - A short stay in pre-departure accommodation (as time-limited as possible and not normally exceeding 72 hours) has the potential of providing some benefits for a very small minority of families who need additional support before their departure. Based on discussions between IFRP members and staff at the pre-departure accommodation in Tinsley House, the staff have a strong focus on the children and families’ welfare support needs. Staff expertise gained when the provision was at Cedars, has been maintained and further built upon. The staff are well prepared to work in partnership with other appropriate organisations. The physical environment and resources available for families with children are of good quality and fit for purpose.

## 7 Areas for development and recommendations

- 7.1 A number of areas for development, along with related recommendations, are given below, for consideration by the Home Office.
- 7.2 From the data presented above, it is apparent that for the relatively small proportion of families who do not return to their country of origin voluntarily, there is a high rate of **aborted removals due to families absconding, lodging further legal claims** – the latter often for tactical disruption of the process rather than for substantive reasons that are upheld - **or being disruptive at airports**. The effect of all such tactics is undesirable from the perspective of the safeguarding and welfare of children in the family: failure to return to their country of origin prolongs uncertainty, which is often accompanied by anxiety within the family about their situation. The experience of repeat arrests is not in the interests of children. Where families abscond, this significantly increases the risk to children in terms of supporting their welfare and safeguarding needs. Neither is it in the interest of the public purse to find those who have absconded and to have to repeat work to engage families in the returns process. The first set of recommendations below arise from consideration of these issues.

**Recommendation 1 - Late legal challenges:** The data set out above shows that a high proportion of enforced removals of families who fail to depart voluntarily fail to take place because of late legal challenges by the family, in many cases despite families having had

previous, failed legal challenges. High Court judges Lady Justice Sharp and Mr Justice Green have recently acknowledged that lawyers are sometimes starting court hearings simply to thwart Home Office attempts to remove illegal immigrants and failed asylum seekers, saying that misconduct among immigration lawyers was 'of deep concern' (The Times, 27.4.18).

However, faced with a legal challenge in the context of a short period before a return is to be effected, it is not surprising that legal judgements that are made in such circumstances might be relatively cautious. Family Returns Unit managers are working to raise awareness with the judiciary about this issue, and the careful and detailed work that has gone into planning and effective return for families which support their welfare and safeguarding needs before families get to the point of the journey to their country of origin. The IFRP supports this process. **The IFRP recommends that work should take place as soon as possible by relevant officers in the Home Office and also in the Ministry of Justice, to raise awareness with the Judiciary about the impact of upholding legal challenges where these may be designed to frustrate family returns.**

**Recommendation 2 – Reducing the incidence of families absconding:** Managers in the Family Returns Unit are working hard to address this issue and are considering a range of initiatives to address it, including the following: using self-check in as opt-in rather than routine; using a wider range of options as to the location of arrest; using shortened or longer notice periods of arrest; and enhanced voluntary return package for families who return early in the family returns process, but with a sliding scale of reductions for those who return later in the process. The IFRP supports such developments. Whilst resolving these issues is a priority for the Family Returns Unit, the same level of priority is not always given by other parts of the Home Office which are a necessary part of the development of such options. **The IFRP recommends that the consideration and implementation of a range of strategies to reduce the incidence of absconding be completed as soon as possible.**

**Recommendation 3 - Consistency of support from Immigration, Compliance and Enforcement teams to reduce the incidence of absconding:** Where absconding is a particular risk, most ICE teams conducting the arrests show flexibility in planning, with the appropriate warrants, to attend more than one location in order to complete a successful arrest. However, this approach is not consistently in evidence across the country. **The IFRP recommends that systems be developed to ensure that ICE teams are consistently able to support arrests at more than one location, where there is a high risk of families absconding.**

**Recommendation 4 - The use of charter flights, in exceptional circumstances.** A small proportion of removals fail because parents of children are disruptive at airports. **The IFRP recommends that, in exceptional circumstances with families who have been disruptive or who have threatened disruption, the Home Office should consider the use of charter flights to ensure the safe removal of the family.**

- 7.3 Another set of issues which deserve further consideration relate to the effectiveness of the family's return to the country of origin.

**Recommendation 5 - Return support:** Currently the Home Office has no mechanism for securing any level of assurance about the safeguarding and welfare of families who return to their country of origin through the required or enforced routes. However, those who return voluntarily have the option of a meet and greet service on arrival at their country of origin. These services are able to provide brief feedback to the Home Office about the family's initial arrival – for example, confirmation that the family has a plan for where they are going and knowledge of how to get there, that the family has sufficient subsistence funds for this initial journey. This provides assurance that the family is not destitute, and has sufficient resilience in their new situation for the welfare and safeguarding needs of family members not to be at significant risk. The IFRP has argued that this service should be extended to the relatively small number of cases that are returned through the required or enforced route.

Officers' initial response has been positive, and officers are working on costings. **The IFRP recommends that the work to provide a meet and greet service for required and ensured returnees be followed through and implemented.**

- 7.4 Appendix 2 sets out progress that has been made in relation to the recommendations made in the IFRP's previous annual report. These included both the collection of data on **children being detained in ports** and the quality of provision for holding children, when necessary, in ports. In February 2018 the Office of the Children's Champion within the Home Office reported on its review of arrangements for holding children at ports. This report evaluated facilities and provisions, holding times, staff interaction with children, and established practices in a number of ports across the country. It concluded that while most facilities provide a physically secure environment for children, and staff are aware of their Section 55 responsibilities, there were questions as to whether Border Force or Tascor (the then contractor) give sufficient attention to children's specific needs while they are being held or take account of what it might be like for them in a confined and unfamiliar environment. The review identified some good practice and made a number of recommendations, in relation to potential physical improvements, promoting children's emotional wellbeing and the collection of data. The report echoes concerns raised in recent years by IFRP members. (We note that, as from 1 May 2018, the contractor is no longer Tascor, but MITIE).

**Recommendation 6 - Holding children at ports: The IFRP welcomes the review by the Office of the Children's Champion into the arrangements for holding children at ports and recommends that the Home Office gives careful consideration to implementing the recommendations.**

**Recommendation 7 – Data on the holding of children at ports:** The IFRP has a remit to monitor the incidence of children being held at ports. Data is provided to the IFRP in relation to the number of children held at contractor-operated facilities, and the IFRP has regularly been assured that children are being held only when, and for as little time, as is necessary. However, there is no evidence of similar data being collated nationally on the length of time children are held in the improvised rooms and spaces overseen by Border Force. This means that there is a lack of a coherent, overall national picture of the data on the holding of children at ports: this undermines our collective endeavour to monitor and promote the safeguarding needs of children on the occasions when it is necessary to hold them at ports. This also undermines the IFRP's ability to properly conduct one of the areas of its remit. **Recommendation 7: The IFRP recommends that a nationally consistent approach be implemented urgently and as a matter of priority, across contractor and Border Force facilities, to the collation/management of data on the holding times of children in ports.**

- 7.5 Other priorities for the IFRP in 2018-19 include the completion of a recruitment process of new panel members, given that the contractual terms of a number of existing panel members ends in October 2018. This process has led to the appointment of four new panel members, balanced by the reappointment of three experienced panel members, who will serve along with the existing chair and a further panel member whose term of office continues. A current priority for the IFRP is the induction and support of new panel members.



## Appendix 1: Visits made by members of the IFRP

During the reporting period IFRP members undertook visits to the following aspects of provision.

- **Work of the Family Returns Unit:** Three members of the panel visited the Family Returns Unit in Leeds, and had discussions with the senior management team, and the teams undertaking the various aspects of the family returns process. One panel member visited the London and South East team of Family Engagement Managers and Officers, held discussions with these officers and observed a Family Returns Conference with a family. A panel member visited Family Returns Unit teams at Solihull, and a further panel member shadowed two Family Engagement Managers. Four panel members visited and contributed to training events for Family Engagement Managers and the Family Returns Unit.
- **Pre-Departure Accommodation:** Nine members of the panel (in two groups on separate occasions) visited the Pre-Departure Accommodation facility for families at Tinsley House near Gatwick and held discussions with all the staff involved in the provision. These visits took place once the new provision there was ready to begin admitting families (there had been some months' gap in provision due to the previous closure of provision at Cedars), but just prior to it beginning to do so.
- **Holding rooms in ports:** An IFRP member visited Stanstead Airport to consider holding facilities for children. In addition, two members of the panel visited Heathrow Terminal 5, to consider arrangements for arriving children in families who need to be questioned because of immigration issues. The visit provided assurance about the arrangements for families with children who need to be kept for limited periods in the holding room at this terminal, as well as the development work on the way that children arriving at borders may be supported by Border Force responses to modern slavery, trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation.
- **Return support:** One panel member met with a delegation from China to discuss developments in China to support returning families. Three panel members held discussions with officers about return support arrangements.
- **Relationships with schools in Scotland:** In 2016 members of the Family Returns Unit (FRU) and the IFRP met with senior staff at Glasgow Education Service to discuss information sharing between Scottish schools and the FRU. It was agreed that information sharing was essential to ensure that the safeguarding interests of children were met during this difficult return process. Information given to schools by the FRU can help schools understand and support the children and families in their care. Information from schools can ensure that the FRU takes account of any issues in planning a safe return for the children and families. As a result of this agreement a presentation and Q&A session took place in September 2016. This was hosted by the Glasgow EAL service and all schools were invited. The outcomes from the session were very positive and information sharing has improved greatly.
- **Workshops with other agencies:** A panel member took part in a relevant UNHCR workshop and a seminar on alternatives to detention for children.

## Appendix 2: Progress made in relation to recommendations in the 2014-16 report

1. Review the **criteria for Cedars** pre-departure accommodation and ensure they are applied consistently. The Home Office accepted this in part. Cedars has been replaced by new pre-departure accommodation at Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre, Gatwick.
2. A **behaviour policy** should be developed which includes as a last resort the use of physical intervention with children, underpinned by a thorough training programme for offices and stringent guidelines for its use. The Home Office response: Accepted in principle; status of recommendation, open. The Family Returns Unit has continued to monitor the number of cases where the lack of a behaviour policy for children has been an issue: in no cases in the last 12 months of the reporting period has this been an issue. Whilst the IFRP continues to consider that the principle of developing a behaviour policy is the right thing to do, we accept that this is not a priority, unless the evidence about prevalence changes.
3. The Home Office should monitor the implementation of the **contract with Reliance** to ensure that the specification is being delivered as intended. The Home Office response: accepted and closed.
4. Monthly **data of children being detained in holding rooms at ports**. The Home Office response: Accepted and closed. However, as per recommendation 7 above, whilst data is collated from holding rooms managed by contractors, data is not comprehensively collated from holding rooms which are managed by Border Force. A coherent set of data which gives the full picture across all ports is necessary.
5. **Protective clothing** should be worn only where risk assessments indicate this is necessary to protect staff or members of the family. The Home office response: rejected.
6. The need for **medics on all return journeys** should be reconsidered. Home Office response: Accepted. The use of medics is considered on a case by case basis; existing policy does not change. Medics are now deployed as a matter of course on flights; and the need for a medic at the arrest or during transfer is considered on a case by case basis.
7. The use of **holding rooms** for anything more than a few hours is inappropriate; they are not always family friendly. There is little to keep children engaged in purposeful activity. Neither are there sufficient fixtures and fittings for rest and recuperation. Home Office response: accepted. In early 2018 the Office of the Children's Champion has undertaken visits to observe practice in a range of ports across the country. The resulting report, 'Review of Border Force arrangements for holding children', helpfully sets out the current issues and makes a series of helpful recommendations, which will improve the welfare and safeguarding of children who need to be held for short periods at ports. In Recommendation 6 of this report the IFRP encourages the Home Office to ensure that these recommendations are implemented.
8. In all cases where **trafficking was suspected or where an individual was referred to the National Referral Mechanism**, the Competent Authority's decision and reasoning should be included in papers submitted to the IFRP. The Home Office response: accepted in part and open. Subsequently, the Home Office has reasserted its position that, in cases where trafficking is an issue, the IFRP should receive only a summary of the information, rather than the full NRM record. The IFRP continues to consider that the full record should be made available, in order to enable the Panel to give the most effective safeguarding and welfare advice.
9. Case owners receive additional training in human trafficking risk mitigation and child safeguarding **where human trafficking is suspected**. The Home Office response: accepted and closed.

