



Independent Family Returns

Independent Family Returns Panel

Annual Report 2018-19

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.

I now present my second annual report as chair of the Independent Family Returns Panel.

Paul Greenhalgh

Chair, Independent Family Returns Panel

Summary of recommendations presented in this report

1. Recommendation 1 – Late claims: The IFRP recommends that, in order to reduce uncertainty and the experience of multiple arrests, the Home Office takes further action to reduce the incidence of removals being cancelled due to very late claims.
2. Recommendation 2 - Trafficking: The IFRP recommends that, in order for the panel to be able to properly fulfil its role, in cases which have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism, the full NRM record (NRM referral form and contractors' exit from services reports) be made available to panel members.
3. Recommendation 3 - Absconding: The IFRP recommends that in order to reduce the incentive to abscond, the notice period of removal given to families should be extended.
4. Recommendation 4 - Information for families about the family returns process: The IFRP recommends that the standard letter to families explaining the family returns process be made easier to understand for families with limited English.
5. Recommendation 5: Third Country returns to Italy: The IFRP recommends that the Home Office continues to seek robust assurance from the Italian authorities about the quality of provision (health, education and legal representation) for migrants being returned on a 'third country' basis to have their asylum claim considered there.
6. Recommendation 6 - Quality of holding room provision: The IFRP recommends that provision in holding rooms at Cayley House (Heathrow), and other holding rooms as appropriate, be improved in line with the standards set out in line with the Office of the Children's Champion's 2018 report.
7. Recommendation 7 - Return support: The IFRP recommends that the Home Office continue to improve return support provision (in line with its acceptance of our 2018 recommendation), particularly in relation to the universal delivery of meet-and-greet provision for families being returned on an enforced basis.

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 in section 2 below. The panel comprises professionals with a range of relevant expertise across the professions of social care, education, the police and medical doctors.
- 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. This report covers the period April 2018 to March 2019. 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 recent improvements made in the 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, along with perceptions of the Panel as to how much progress has been made, is also provided.
- 1.5 2018-19 was a busy year for the panel, for two main reasons:
 - The panel had an increased workload in this reporting year. As shown in section 3 below, the number of statutory referrals to the panel increased from 44 in 2017-8 to 77 in 2018-9.
 - The term of office of seven members of the of the nine members of the panel came to an end during the year, which required a significant selection process. From a large field of applications, a selection process was undertaken which successfully resulted in the re-appointment of 3 panel members and the appointment of 4 new panel members. (Two further panel members continued their term of office). This outcome provided a good mix to the panel of experienced and new panel members. A full induction programme was provided for the new members. Thanks are given to the outgoing panel members, who had provided significant expertise to the panel over a number of years,

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 Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 as inserted by 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.

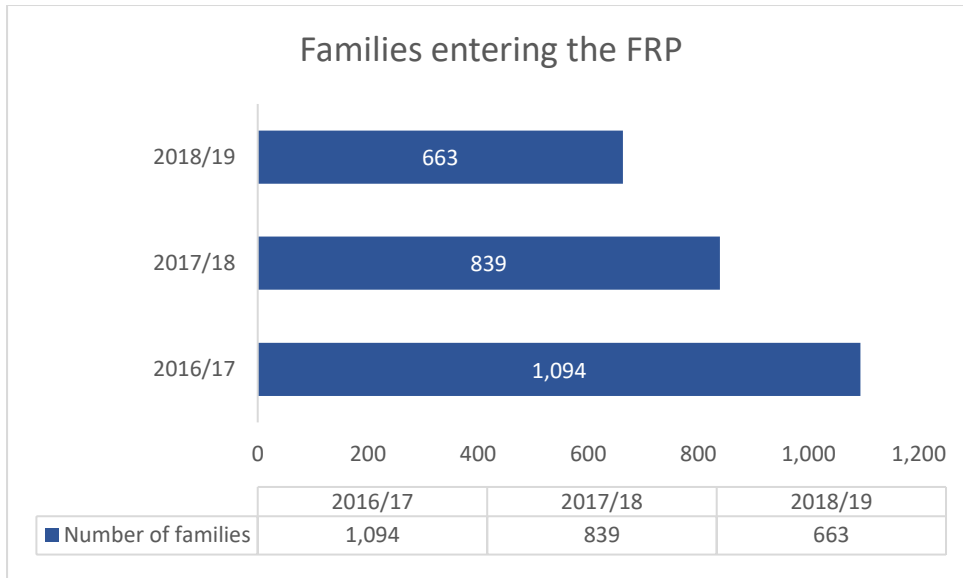
3. Family returns data and analysis

Figures in this section are as published under the Government's Transparency Agenda unless otherwise indicated with *.

Families entering the Family Returns Process

- 3.1 Most families entering the Family Returns Process leave the country voluntarily: the Independent Family Returns Panel considers only the small minority of families who are being considered for a required or ensured return. Data is provided here about the total number of families entering the returns process, as a context for the work of the panel. As shown in the graph below, there has been a year-on-year fall in the number of cases entering the Family Returns Process. It was during the latter half of the reporting year that work involving families choosing to depart voluntarily transferred from the Family Returns Unit to the Voluntary Returns Service Directorate, within the Home Office, and the associated change in how those cases were handled meant that they were no longer considered to have entered the Family Returns Process, accounting for the significantly lower number having entered compared to the previous year.

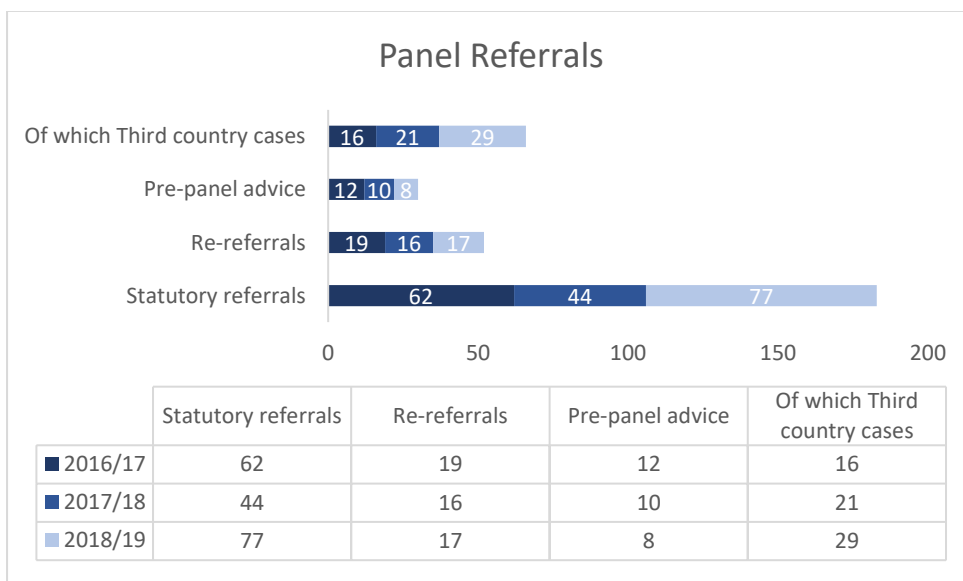
Chart 1



Referrals to the Panel

3.2 Referrals to the Panel increased markedly in this reporting year. This was due to several factors including a new case progression model, recruitment of further Family Engagement Managers and the transfer of the previously mentioned voluntary departure work, allowing Family Engagement Managers to focus on those families choosing not to depart voluntarily. Third country cases refer to families who came to the UK via another European country and under rules of the Dublin Convention, are being considered for return to this 'third country' for the hearing of their asylum claim.

Chart 2



Conclusions from the Family Returns Process

3.3 Historically, voluntary returns made up the largest category of returns from the Family Returns Process. The transference of this area of work to the Voluntary Returns Service, beginning mid-2018 and completed by the end of 2018, meant that the overall numbers of families returned via the Family Returns Process was significantly lower than the previous reporting year. All other types of return are in line with expectations.

Chart 3

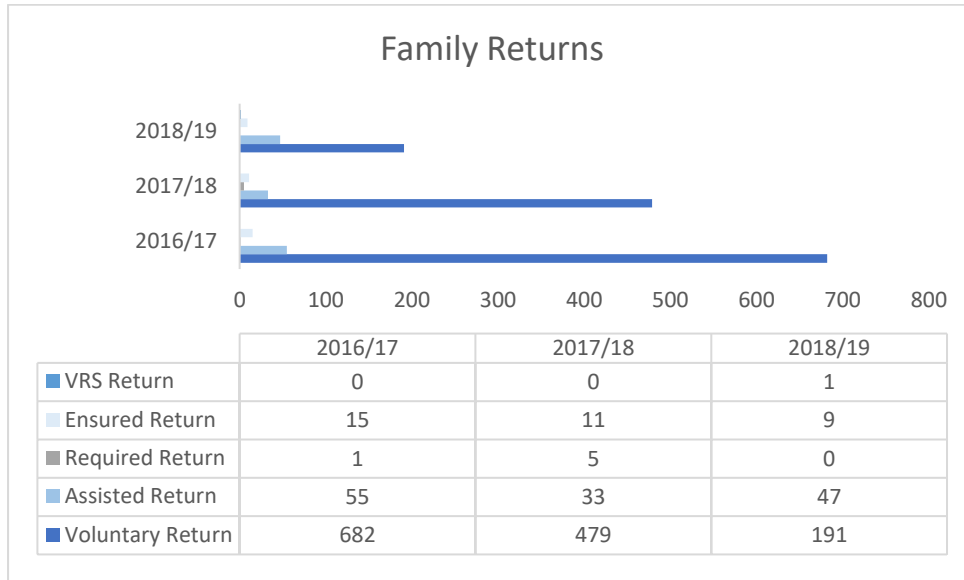
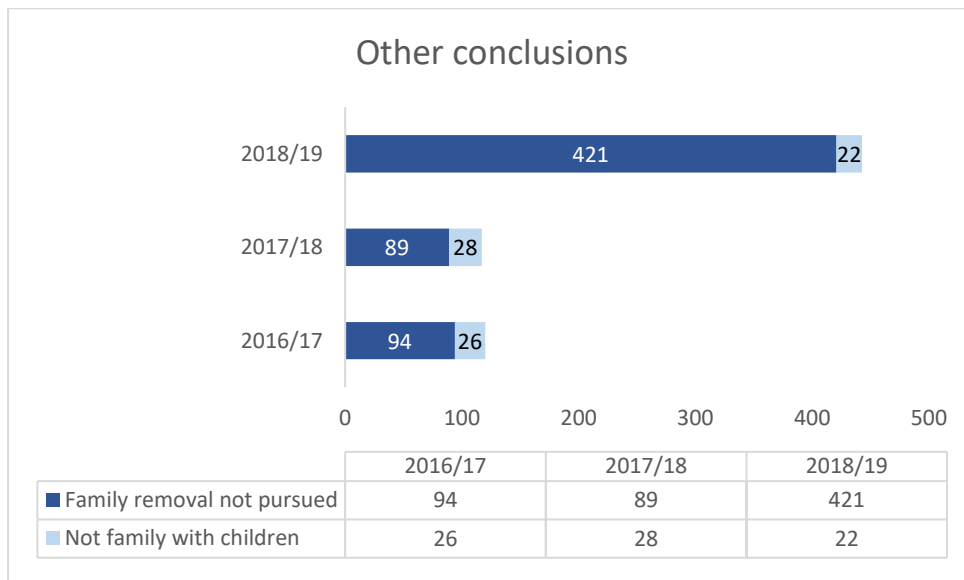


Chart 4



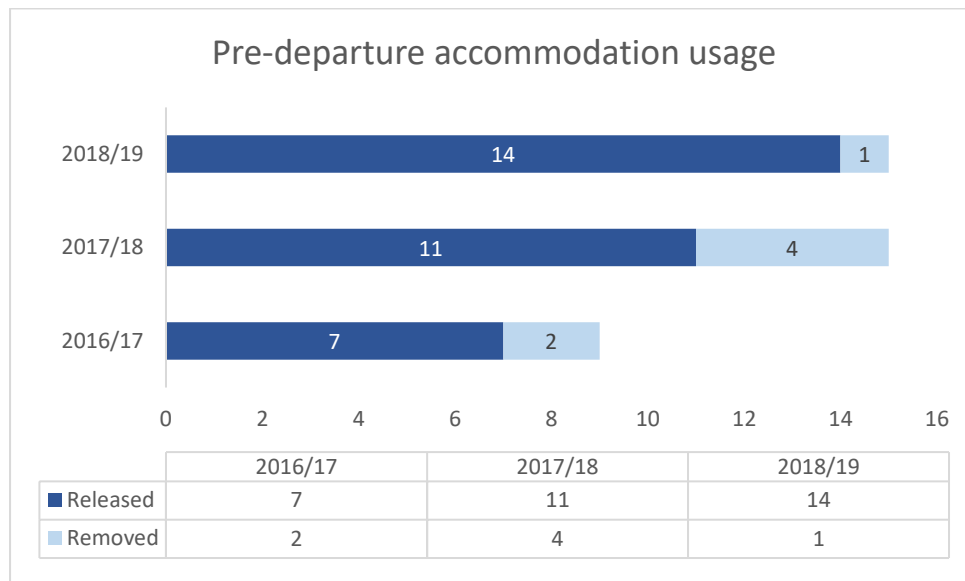
3.4 In relation to families in the Family Returns process overall, there was a significant increase in 2018-19 in the number of families whose removal was not pursued because the family was granted either a temporary or permanent basis of stay in the UK. This was, in part, due to case law that supported the right of children with a significant period of residence in the UK to remain here. The number of families where

there was no longer a dependent child under the age of 18 was similar to previous years.

Pre-departure accommodation usage*

3.5 As shown in the data below, the number of families that were accommodated in Pre-Departure Accommodation was the same as the previous year, but only one of those families was successfully removed from the UK. Legal challenges, disruption and other barriers to removal meant that 14 of the 15 families using Pre-Departure Accommodation were not removed from the UK. The overall low usage of Pre-Departure Accommodation reflects that it is only recommended as part of a return plan as a last resort or where it is used as a contingency to a same-day removal that has failed.

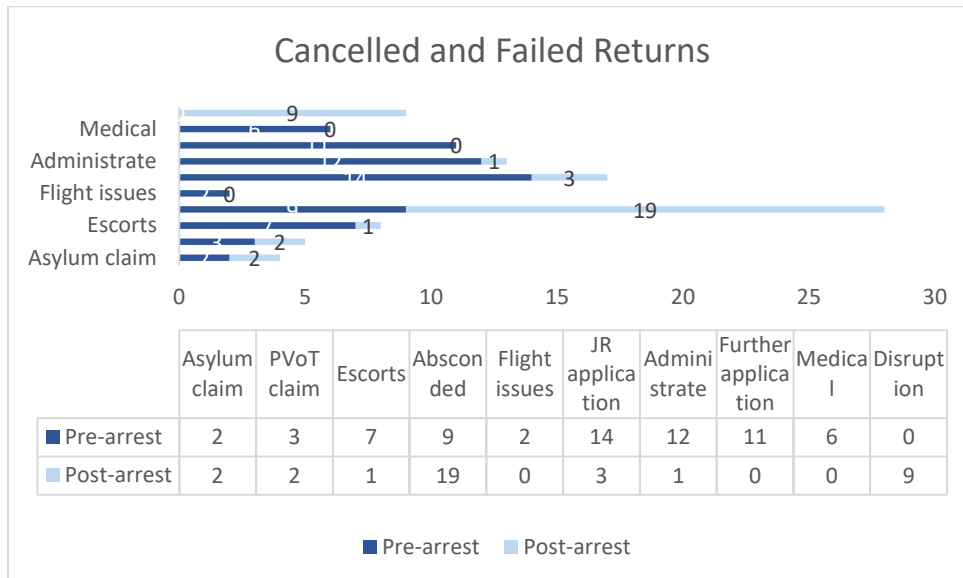
Chart 5



Cancellations and failed returns*

3.6 The most common reason why removal directions were cancelled was the family absconding during the Family Returns Process. In most of cases the family absconds late in the Family Returns Process: in 19 of the 29 instances the family were not encountered at their home by the arresting immigration officers but were seen recently by the Family Engagement Manager at their Family Departure Meeting. The other single most common reason was the submission of an application for Judicial Review, with its submission usually being before the actual planned arrest date.

Chart 6



4 Evaluation of the work of the panel

4.1 Panel members have evaluated the work of the panel in relation to its strengths, its impact and the areas of work which it needs to develop and improve. The outcomes of this evaluation are provided below.

Strengths of the Panel’s work

4.2 The Panel provides a specific input to a larger process which is managed by the Family Returns Unit of the Home Office. In order to fulfil its remit, the panel has to work in collaboration with a range of staff within the Home Office, with both operational and policy remits, and panel members also need to be aware of developments taking place in related work by NGOs. Panel members consider the following particular strengths in the way in which the panel works:

- The membership of the panel provides a broad range and depth of multi-professional expertise.
- Decision-making is achieved by consensus.
- The panel rigorously focuses on the safeguarding and welfare needs of the children within the families under consideration.
- In discussion of families the panel’s relentless focus is upon risk in the proposed return plan and the mitigation of this risk.
- Panel members conduct an ongoing programme of visits to observe how the system works with families and to discuss work with staff whose responsibility it is

- to organise the return arrangements. This enables individual cases to be considered in context of up to date knowledge of the broader system.
- Panel members have regular engagement with other agencies such as NGOs. This means that the wider views of a range of players are then fed into panel deliberations. For example, the panel recently considered what family returns practice in the UK had to learn from NGO recommendations for the practice of family returns, and we gave feedback to the NGO concerned about our deliberations.

The Panel's impact

- 4.3 The panel has continued to provide advice which has secured children's safeguarding and welfare needs. The impact of the Panel is considered below in relation to individual cases, in relation to the Panel's contribution to systemic improvement within the Family Returns system, and in relation to international recognition of its work. The panel also makes an impact through the formal provision of recommendations in its annual reports. A brief evaluation of progress by the Home Office on the latter is provided in section 5 of this report.

Examples of the difference made by the Panel to families' return plans

- 4.4 The Panel has made a difference to the return plans of families in a range of ways: the following examples from 2018-19 give an indication of these.
- In cases of potential specific vulnerability, the panel has encouraged the Home Office to work with families to seek to secure **proactive referral**, ahead of return, to specific support organisations in the country of return.
 - **Various** other advice was given for changes to be made to return plans, including, for example:
 - The panel picked up on the existence of an 'extra' child who had not been disclosed by the family. The panel's intervention regarding the need to gain assurance about this missing child, resulted in the Home Office taking action which resulted in it becoming aware that this child had been previously returned, as a baby, to its grandparents in China.
 - A medical member of the panel picked up in the medical notes of one family that the father was working as a builder and left the house early each day – this enabled the panel to recommend an alteration of the arrest time.
 - In one case the panel made recommendations with regard to the possibility for a family split if this became necessary, advising that a split in this case should not take place, except in very specific circumstances.
 - In a case where the family had not been traceable by the Home Office for nearly a month, the panel requested that other agencies become involved to search for a missing child.
 - Where the plan was to return a family via **Pre-Departure Accommodation**, in some cases the panel recommended that a particular focus be given to the work

to support the family in PDA, so as to maximise safeguarding and welfare outcomes for the children.

- The panel has recommended that **some removals be postponed**:
 1. where a mother and daughter were returning and the mother was not engaging with mental health therapy;
 2. where a child was not medically fit to fly;
 3. where a girl's mental health condition was considered to be so vulnerable that the panel considered that the referral to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service which had happened should be given the opportunity to be followed through.

Examples of system improvement as a result of informal feedback from panel members

4.5 The ongoing programme of visits to various elements of the work of the Family Returns Unit (see appendix for list of visits undertaken in the reporting year) provides an opportunity for Panel members to provide feedback to managers. In addition to formal feedback through the recommendations of its annual reports (and progress made on these is reported in section 5 below), the Panel also provides informal feedback to managers, which is designed to support the continuous improvement of the service. Given below are some examples of the impact of informal feedback by Panel members which has led to system improvement.

- **Family Welfare Form:** the panel was heavily involved in making improvements to the Family Welfare Form, which sets out the circumstances of the family, to be considered by the panel. The redesign gives greater focus to risk and proposed strategies for mitigating identified risks.
- **Challenge by Family Engagement Managers:** The panel has given feedback about how the interaction between Family Engagement Managers and families enables families to remain effectively engaged with the returns process. During the reporting year there were more examples of Family Engagement Managers appropriately and successfully challenging families to remain appropriately engaged with the process.

International recognition of the work of the panel

4.6 Over recent years the IFRP has been requested by various inter-governmental organisations to share information on the creation and operation of the IFRP. Particular interest has been shown in how the safeguarding of children and families in the return process impacts upon removal issues and how returns can be implemented from the community in order to minimise the use of detention in the removal of accompanied children. The Panel's last report (covering the period 2016-2018) acknowledged how various international organisations and reports had acknowledged the IFRP as a model of good practice in improving the safeguarding and welfare of children in the returns process.

- 4.7 In the 2018-19 reporting year the panel engaged with UNICEF in its research on ensuring the rights and protection of migrant children in the returns processes. A panel member, along with the Home Office, met with colleagues from other Council of Europe states, to provide information on the work of the IFRP as an example of good practice. As part of the Council of Europe's commitment to assisting member states build strategies to respond to the problems affecting refugee and migrant children and families the IFRP were asked by the Office of the Special Representative on Migration and Refugees to contribute to a handbook reflecting good and promising practices, methods and tools. This may result in increased attention for and possible adoption of the practices of the IFRP in other Council of Europe member states. The IFRP contribution covered the following areas: the ending of the detention of children; the welfare, safeguarding and best interests of children at the centre of the return plan, with the expert input of a multi-disciplinary team via the Independent Family Returns Panel; and the IFRP's role as a critical friend to the UK Home Department and the impact at policy level and front line operational procedure in establishing and embedding child safeguarding and welfare of the panel considerations at all levels. We understand that the report of findings will be published in autumn 2019.

Improvements to be made by the panel:

- 4.8 Panel members agreed that the following areas of work are priority areas for improvement in its work during 2019-20:
- Ensure the visits programme includes a more systematic observation of arrests.
 - Ensure the visits programme considers more systematically the issue of training provided on children's safeguarding and welfare issues to both FRU and contractor staff.
 - Further strengthen engagement with NGOs in terms of range of NGOs interested in the family returns issue.

5 Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Panel's 2016-18 report

- 5.1 The panel's previous report covered not only the previous year, but the year prior to this, for which no report had been written. Of the seven recommendations made in the report, the Home Office accepted five fully and the other two in principle/in part. The recommendations made by the panel in 2018 are given below, along with a summary of the formal Home Office response and the Panel's view of progress being made in the Home Office's implementation of those recommendations.

1. **Late legal challenges:** The IFRP recommended that work should take place as soon as possible by relevant officers in the Home Office and 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. Home Office response: accepted. Panel comment: Whilst some progress has been made the incidence of late legal challenges – from families whose previous legal challenges have been dismissed – remained high in 2018-19, and a major cause of cancelled returns. However, in the first months of the subsequent financial year, such late challenges have been dealt with more efficiently.

2. **Reducing the incidence of families absconding:** The IFRP recommended that the consideration and implementation of a range of strategies to reduce the incidence of absconding be completed as soon as possible. Home Office response: accepted in principle. Panel comment: There has been some useful policy development, but the issue of the length of notice for removal windows remains unresolved.
3. **Consistency of support from ICE teams to reduce the incidence of absconding:** The IFRP recommended 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. Home Office response: accepted in part. Panel comment: this seems to have been less of an issue in 2018-19: ICE teams are more consistently open to conducting arrests at more than one address.
4. **The use of charter flights in exceptional circumstances:** The IFRP recommended 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. Home Office response: Accepted. Panel comment: Whilst the Home Office accepted this recommendation, during 2018-19 no use of charter flights for families was needed.
5. **Return support:** The IFRP recommended that work to provide a meet and greet service for required and ensured returnees be followed through and implemented. Home Office response: accepted. Panel comment: during 2018-19 practice improved notably in this area, with Family Engagement Managers being more rigorous about this aspect of the plan. Whilst the use of a meet and greet service has improved, it remains the case that this is not systematically provided for all families.
6. **Holding children at ports:** The IFRP welcomed the review by the Office of the Children's Champion (OCC) into the arrangements for holding children at ports and recommended that the Home Office gives careful consideration to implementing the recommendations. Home Office response: accepted. Panel comment: The limited evidence available to the panel suggests that the recommendations of the OCC report have not yet been rigorously implemented.
7. **Data on holding children at ports:** The IFRP recommended 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 at ports. Home Office response: accepted. Panel comment: The Border Force has engaged well with the panel to improve the data set which is provided to the Panel.

6 Recent improvements in the family returns process for those subject to an enforced return

- 6.1 Given the Panel's statutory remit to make recommendations to the Home Office on the best method of returning individual families to their home country to ensure the welfare

needs of specific children and families subject to an enforced return process, in undertaking this work Panel members become aware of general patterns in the effectiveness of the family returns process. Panel members are therefore well placed to comment on improvements and areas for development of systems to support the return of families who may be subject to enforced return, and so to contribute to the continuous improvement of the service. Given below are some comments on the perceived recent improvements in the service. These are followed, in section 7, by the Panel's formal recommendations to address issues which require improvement.

6.2 Based on their experience of ongoing work with the Family Returns Unit, the Panel would like to acknowledge the following perceived recent improvements in the work of the unit:

- Significant improvements in work-flow and number of cases coming to the panel were made in 2018-19.
- Improvements were made in evaluation and analysis by Family Engagement Managers, as evidenced by the improving quality of completed Family Welfare forms provided to the panel. An example of this would be the provision of more detailed notes on observations of children's behaviour during family interviews.
- Despite increasing difficulties in securing bookings with airlines, the system has remained resilient in this respect and appropriate flights have been secured for planning returns.
- Planning for support for families in their country of origin has improved, as evidenced on the Family Welfare Forms considered by the panel. For example, tailored information to support return to a number of countries is now routinely provided to families.

7 Recommendations to the Home Office

7.1 The Panel makes the following formal recommendations to the Home Office for to address issues which, in the judgement of the Panel, require further improvement.

1. **Late claims:** Late claims which result in cancelled returns produces uncertainty and the experience of multiple arrests, which is not helpful for the safeguarding and welfare needs of children. As indicated above, evidence from the early part of the 2019-20 financial year indicates that late legal challenges are being dealt with much more efficiently, with fewer returns being cancelled for this reason. However, more families are making very late asylum claims and claims to have been a victim of trafficking. **The IFRP recommends that, in order to reduce uncertainty and the experience of multiple arrests, the Home Office takes further action to reduce the incidence of removals being cancelled due to very late claims.**

- 2. Trafficking:** In cases where there has been trafficking in the history of the family and where the family has been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the panel receives a very short summary of the NRM outcomes, of just a few sentences. The Home Office has been made aware that this is insufficient for the panel to be able to properly assess the risks to the family during the return process, and to make appropriate recommendations to secure the welfare and safeguarding needs of the family. During 2018-19 there was little engagement on this issue by the Home Office. **The IFRP recommends that, in order for the panel to be able to properly fulfil its role, in cases which have been referred to the National Referral Mechanism, the full NRM record (NRM referral form and contractors' exit from services reports) be made available to panel members.**
- 3. Absconding:** Panel members remain concerned that absconding by families brings safeguarding risks for children. The mechanisms for giving notice to families of the period in which an enforced return will happen has an impact on families being prepared to abscond. The panel supports the thinking of the FRU management that notice period of removal given to families should be extended to 90 days. **The IFRP recommends that in order to reduce the incentive to abscond, the notice period of removal given to families should be extended.**
- 4. Information for families about the family returns process:** In the previous reporting period, the panel gave feedback about the style of a standard letter to families which explained the family returns process and made suggestions for making this information more accessible. Despite some indications of development work to improve this, this change has not been implemented, although at September 2019 the panel is informed that this work is underway. **Information for families about the family returns process: The IFRP recommends that the standard letter to families explaining the family returns process be made easier to understand for families with limited English.**
- 5. Third Country returns to Italy:** Over recent months the Italian authorities have closed down a number of facilities which housed and provided services to migrants whilst their claims were being considered. The panel has considered a number of families who, under the provisions of the Dublin convention were being returned, on an ensured basis, to Italy as the responsible authority to consider their asylum claim. Given the testimony of families about their initial experiences in Italy, and the concerns of NGOs about the deterioration in treatment of migrants in Italy, the panel has a growing concern about third country referrals to Italy. **The IFRP recommends that the Home Office continues to seek robust assurance from the Italian authorities about the quality of provision (health, education, and legal representation) for migrants being returned on a 'third country' basis to have their asylum claim considered there.**
- 6. Quality of holding room provision:** Panel members undertake some direct observations of return support provision (see appendix for a list of visits made in the reporting year). Members' observations of the holding rooms at Cayley House (Heathrow) have raised concerns that, despite some effort by staff to make the

provision more child-friendly, the provision remains inappropriate for families with children, who are likely to be experiencing some trauma as a result of arrest and being in the process of an enforced concern. Children's welfare needs should be met through a more appropriate range of comfortable facilities for sitting and sleeping, and of a range of age-appropriate materials including games and books. Provision should be in line with the expectations set out in the 2018 report on provision for families in holding rooms at ports by the Office of the Children's Champion (which the panel welcomed in its last annual report). **The IFRP recommends that provision in holding rooms at Cayley House (Heathrow), and other holding rooms as appropriate, be improved in line with the standards set out in line with the Office of the Children's Champion's 2018 report.**

7. **Return support:** The panel is pleased that the Home Office accepted our recommendation on this area of work in our previous report, specifically that meet and greet provision, provided for voluntary returnees, should be extended to enforced returnees. There remains further work to do, particularly in relation to the systematic delivery of 'meet and greet' provision in the country of return. **The IFRP recommends that the Home Office continue to improve return support provision (in line with its acceptance of our 2018 recommendation), particularly in relation to the universal delivery of meet-and-greet provision for families being returned on an enforced basis.**

8 The detention of children for over 20 hours at ports

- 8.1 The monitoring of the detention of children for over 20 hours at ports is a non-statutory aspect of the Panel's work. An issue over the reliability of data came to light in the previous review period. Border Force officials have made appropriate progress in addressing this issue and a new, more comprehensive, data set has been made available to the Panel.
- 8.2 From the data seen by the panel, no significant concerns have come to light about the inappropriate detention of children. Evidence presented to the panel suggests that in the unusual situations where children need to be detained at ports for longer than 20 hours, the Border Force appears to bring due awareness to the way in which it deals with such challenging and sensitive cases.

Appendix 1 Visits and observations by Panel members

- Shadowing Family Engagement Managers: 2 visits to East Midlands and 1 visit to Liverpool
- 5 panel members visited Family Returns Unit main offices in Leeds to observe work processes and have discussions with a range of staff
- 8 panel members visited Pre-Departure Accommodation at Gatwick
- 8 panel members visited Cayley House holding facility at Heathrow
- 1 panel member observed an Immigration Tribunal
- 1 panel member attended an NGO meeting in Brussels