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UK Borders Act 2007

The Act was passed by Parliament in October 2007. However, it is only recently that most of its provisions have begun to come into force. Further information as to what in the Act is now in force and what is not, is provided by the "UK Borders Act 2007" information sheet.

Immigration Rules changes

Important changes to the Immigration Rules are being made by HC 321 Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules. More information is given about these changes in information sheets on "Immigration Rules – general grounds for refusal" and "Immigration Rules – general grounds update".

UK Borders Agency

The Border and Immigration Agency will be renamed on 1 April. The new Agency will be called the UK Borders Agency. It will bring together the work of the Border and Immigration Agency, HM Revenue and Customs at the borders and UK Visas – see: <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/borderpolicingstrengthened>

Citizenship

The Government has published a Green Paper entitled *Path to Citizenship*. This makes various proposals to change the way in which immigrants, who intend to make the UK their long-term home, may become British citizens.

Shortly after the Green Paper was published, Lord Goldsmith QC published his report and recommendations following his review of citizenship.

Further information is available from the "Path to Citizenship" and "Simplification Project 2" information sheets. See also the January 2008 "Citizenship Review" information sheet.

Simplification

In June 2007, the Government announced their intention to simplify immigration

law. The *Path to Citizenship* Green Paper also gives some further information about these plans – see also the "Simplification Project 2" information sheet.

Biometric Identity Cards

The UK Borders Act 2007 gives the Government powers to introduce a compulsory biometric identity card scheme for foreign nationals in the UK. The Government has published a consultation paper on its plans for introducing this scheme. The paper is available at: <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/consultations/idcards/>

Iraqi and Zimbabwean refused asylum-seekers

Certain Iraqis and Zimbabweans who have been refused asylum may be receiving letters from the Border and Immigration Agency at this time.

Around 500 refused asylum-seekers from Zimbabwe in the North West are expected to receive a letter inviting them to make a voluntary departure from the UK. They may receive the letter despite having outstanding appeals or fresh claims. A decision from the Court of Appeal is awaited on the test case for Zimbabwe asylum claims (see "Zimbabwean Asylum Claims" information sheet).

Iraqis who have been receiving section 4 support may receive letters informing them that their support may be discontinued. This is because the Government says there are now safe routes for someone to make a voluntary return anywhere in Iraq. However, there are outstanding cases before the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and the European Court of Justice challenging the safety of returns to central and southern Iraq.

Iraqis and Zimbabweans receiving these letters may be in need of urgent immigration advice.

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21st March 2008