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Government pledge to end detention of children welcomed by Refugee and Migrant Justice

Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ) has welcomed the pledge from the new coalition administration to end the detention of children for immigration purposes.

Caroline Slocock, Chief Executive of RMJ said:

“We are delighted at the decision to end child detention for immigration purposes and applaud the new government for recognising the inhumanity of this practice - which treats children like criminals when they have done no crime and can leave scars for life. We hope that this will be implemented immediately and that whatever measures brought in to replace detention will put the welfare and safety of these children first.

“We hope that this change of policy will also extend to migrant children currently being imprisoned in this country due to disputes about their age. In all cases, children should be given the benefit of the doubt rather than running the risk of locking up children with adults.

“We also call on the new government to review inhumane practices toward migrant children as highlighted in our report *Safe at Last*. The report exposed the fact that exhausted and often unwell children are being interviewed on record on arrival at Dover, without legal representation and without regard to their welfare needs.”

Background Information

Refugee and Migrant Justice, formerly the Refugee Legal Centre, is the largest specialist national provider of legal representation to asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants. RMJ was awarded the Liberty/Justice Human Rights Award in 2005, in particular for its litigation work with Zimbabwean asylum seekers.

To download our groundbreaking reports on children, *Safe at Last?* and *Does Every Child Matter* visit our website: <http://www.rmj.org.uk/>

The joint report from Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Faculty of Public

Health calling for an end to immigration detention can be downloaded here:
www.rcpch.ac.uk/doc.aspx?id_Resource=5829

Caroline Slocock, chief executive of Refugee and Migrant Justice is available for interview. For more information or to arrange interviews please contact Alex Valk, at avalk@rmj.org.uk or call 0207 780 3214.