

Refugee Council

Information



SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING
REFUGEES

DETENTION OF CHILDREN

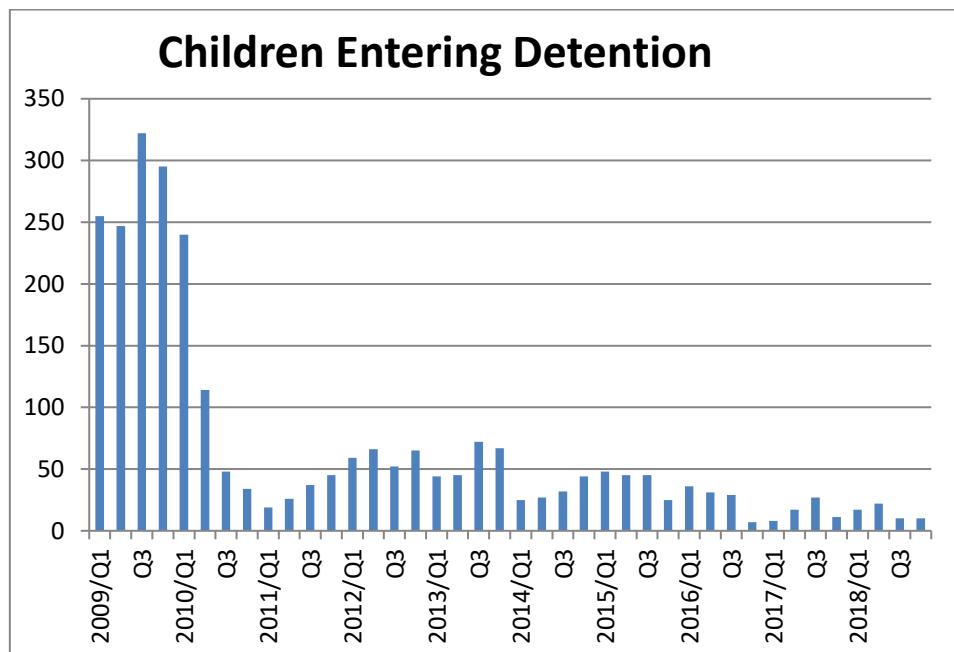
February 2019

In May 2010 the Government announced its intention to end the detention of children, followed by the announcement in December 2010 of a new process to arrange for the departure of families with children, including the use of secure 'pre-departure' accommodation for families refusing to cooperate with the departure process.

The pre-departure facility Cedars opened in August 2011 but was closed in October 2016. Families with children may still be held in short term holding facilities at ports of entry, at Gatwick Pre-Departure Accommodation, or at Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre (usually in the Family Unit), pending admission to the UK or removal. Detention at other Immigration Removal Centres does still occur however in a small number of cases.

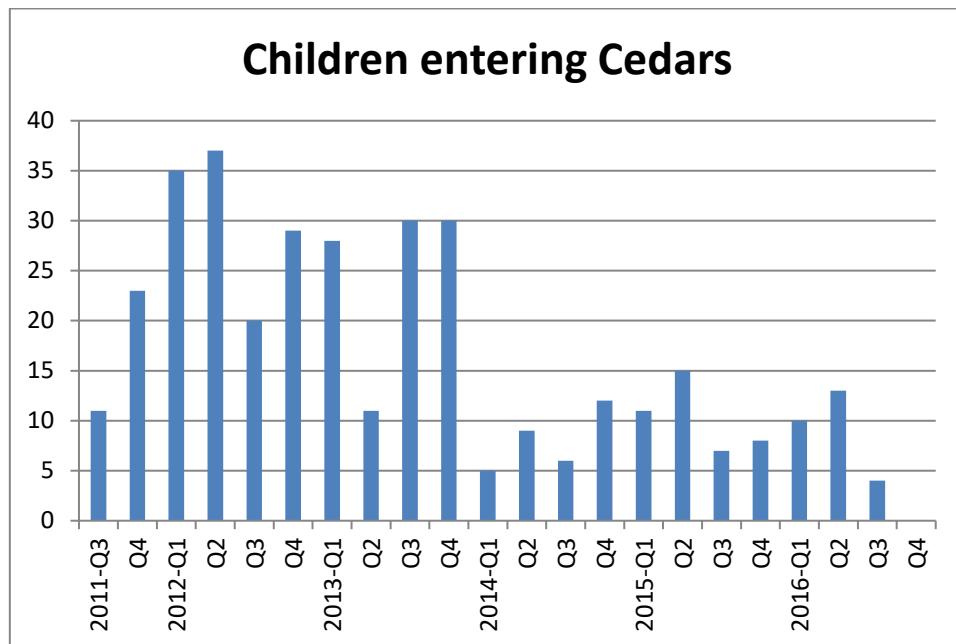
The number of children detained has undoubtedly fallen as a result of the changed procedures, but children are still being detained.

The chart below shows the number of children entering detention each quarter since the beginning of 2009. The numbers dropped sharply during 2010 and have remained relatively low compared with earlier years.

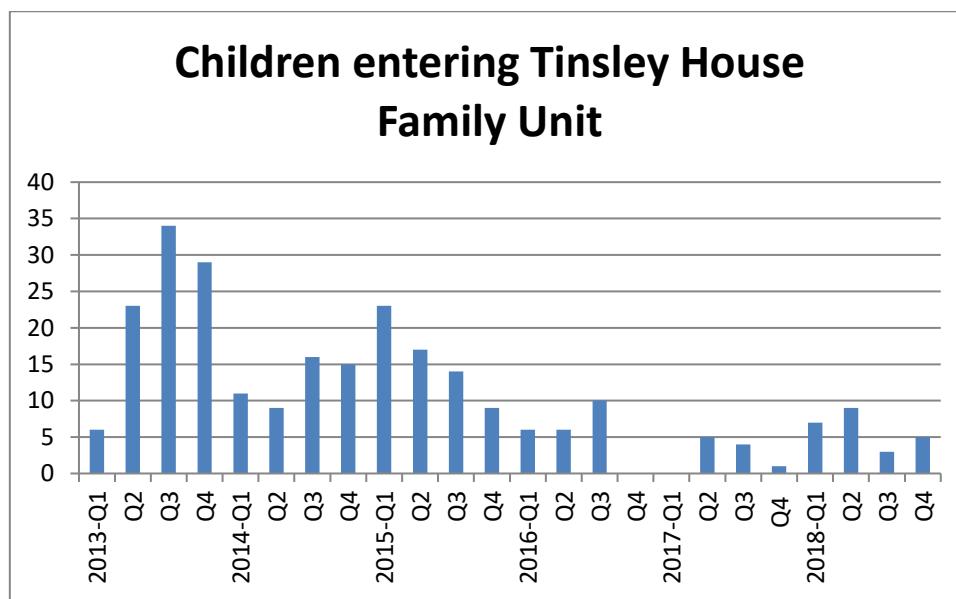


Since the opening of Cedars the majority of detained children were at either Cedars or Tinsley House until the closure of Cedars. In the last quarter of 2016 the family unit at Tinsley House was closed for refurbishment, and this is reflected in the small number of children detained in that quarter and the first quarter of 2017. In 2017 the Home Office started to use the pre-departure accommodation at Gatwick.

The quarterly figures for the number of children entering detention at Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation are shown in the chart below. The figures for the 3rd quarter of 2011 relate to two months only as the centre opened in August.



The quarterly figures for the number of children entering the Tinsley House Family Unit are shown in the chart below.



In the 2nd quarter of 2017 the Home Office started to use the Pre-Departure Accommodation at Gatwick. In that quarter 2 children were detained there, in the 3rd quarter of 2017 there were 11, in the 4th quarter of 2017 there were 5, in the first quarter of 2018 there were 10, in the second quarter there were 13, in the third quarter there were 7, and in the fourth quarter there were 6.

For some time the Home Office published monthly statistics for the detention of children, but that has now ended, mainly because they believe that the quarterly data is more robust.

The full statistics can be found via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2018/list-of-tables#asylum>

About the Refugee Council

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. We give help and support to asylum seekers and refugees, and also work with them to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed by decision-makers.