



# Refugees Welcome?

## **The Experience of New Refugees in the UK**

A report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees

**April 2017**

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the inquiry panel only, acting in a personal capacity, based on the evidence they received and heard during the inquiry. The printing costs of the report were funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust.



## About the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees brings together Parliamentarians from all political parties with an interest in refugees. The group's mission is to provide a forum for the discussion of issues relating to refugees, both in the UK and abroad, and to promote the welfare of refugees.

Secretariat support is provided to the All Party Parliamentary Group by the charity The Refugee Council.

For more information about the All Party Parliamentary Group, please contact [parliamentary@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:parliamentary@refugeecouncil.org.uk).

A full list of members of the APPG on Refugees is available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk), and updates of the work of the APPG are available on the group's twitter account: @APPGRefugees

## About the inquiry

This inquiry was carried out by a panel of Parliamentarians on behalf of the APPG on Refugees, with support provided by the Refugee Council. The panel consisted of members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They were:

**Thangam Debbonnaire MP** (Labour) –  
Chair of the APPG on Refugees and the inquiry

**Lord David Alton** (Crossbench)

**David Burrowes MP** (Conservative)

**Lord Alf Dubs** (Labour)

**Paul Butler, the Bishop of Durham**

**Baroness Barbara Janke** (Liberal Democrat)

**Anne McLaughlin MP** (Scottish National Party)

**Baroness Ruth Lister** (Labour)

**Caroline Lucas MP** (Green)

All evidence submitted to the inquiry is available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees\\_welcome-inquiry](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/refugees_welcome-inquiry)

The panel would like to thank all those who submitted evidence to the inquiry. The panel would particularly like to thank those who gave oral evidence to the inquiry and who gave up their time to meet with panel members during the trips to Bristol and Nottingham.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Refugees Welcome? The Experience of New Refugees in the UK</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Background to the Inquiry</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 2: The Move On Period</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Documentation for newly recognised refugees.....	13
Welfare Reform .....	17
Bank Accounts.....	18
Housing.....	19
The impact of the problems associated with the move on period .....	22
Parliamentary calls to extend the move on period.....	22
Comparison with resettled refugees.....	24
<b>Chapter 3: Integration after the Move On Period</b> .....	<b>27</b>
The process of integration.....	27
English Language.....	28
Employment, training and higher education.....	30
Healthcare .....	33
Women refugees .....	36
Child refugees .....	37
Family Reunion .....	39
Safe Return Reviews .....	42
The impact of the asylum system .....	43
<b>Chapter 4: Refugees Welcome in the UK?</b> .....	<b>47</b>
The two-tier system .....	47
The role of local authorities.....	47
The lack of a UK strategy for all refugees .....	48
Integration as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme .....	49
Local Community Refugee Welcome.....	50
<b>Chapter 5: A National Refugee Integration Strategy</b> .....	<b>51</b>
A Minister for Refugees .....	52
“Not everybody is Mo Farah”.....	53
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>55</b>
Annex 1: Terms of Reference.....	58

# Executive Summary

## Refugees Welcome?

*“In the network we have people who are engineers, community leaders, teachers, people with important skills who can contribute to this country. When we’re talking about refugees that achieve great things for this country – like Mo Farah – not everybody is Mo Farah, but everybody has something to give to this country.”*

*Kolbassia, Survivors Speak Out network<sup>1</sup>*

On 3 September 2015, people up and down the UK awoke to newspaper front pages and news bulletins displaying the picture of a Turkish police officer carrying the body of a young Syrian boy who had drowned during an attempt to reach Greece. We would later come to know that that boy’s name was Alan Kurdi. In the months following those reports, there has been much debate both inside and outside of Parliament on what the UK’s response to the global refugee crisis should be. This debate has predominantly focused on how many refugees the UK can and should offer protection to.

Very little time, if any, has been given to considering what happens to refugees once they have been granted protection by the UK Government. In undertaking this inquiry, we set out to ask to what extent refugees are welcomed in the UK. We started from the idea that protection does not end when a decision to grant someone refugee status is made. We wanted to look into how government policies supported refugees in the UK,

and what more could be done to support communities to successfully welcome refugees.

What became clear during the course of our inquiry is that there are dozens, if not hundreds, of examples of individuals, communities, organisations and local authorities playing a key role in welcoming refugees. We were told about the determination and desire that refugees have to meet the challenges they face. We were also told of areas where Government policies were supporting refugees to integrate and build their lives in the UK. However, in too many areas we identified barriers to integration and a lack of support for refugees that undermine those positive examples and that take away from the protection that refugee status should entail.

- We recommend that the Government introduce a cross-departmental National Refugee Integration Strategy that is applicable to all refugees in the UK. The strategy should learn from the positive examples we were told about to coordinate support for refugees so that they are able to rebuild their lives and make full use of their talents and abilities to take part in, and contribute to, British society.
- We recommend that a Minister for Refugees should be appointed to oversee the National Refugee Integration Strategy, and to ensure there is a focus on refugee policy within the Government.
- Following the referendum result of 23 June 2016 and the vote to leave the European Union, there will be a need to develop a new, post-Brexit immigration system. Part of that system, and of showing that the UK remains global-facing, should be a refugee policy based on compassion that allows refugees to rebuild their lives and for the UK to benefit from the talent and resilience that refugees bring. The Minister for Refugees and the National Refugee Integration Strategy should be central in shaping that policy.

### Two-tier system

The evidence we received shows that a two-tier system has developed for refugees. Refugees in the UK will either have gone through the asylum process having arrived in the UK and then submitted an application, or they will have been brought to the UK directly from another country through one of the Government-led resettlement schemes.

Those refugees who arrive through a resettlement route are provided with accommodation and receive support to access services and find employment. For refugees who have gone through the asylum system, there is no such support. This was not always the case. Between 2008 and 2011, the Government funded a programme to help newly recognised refugees navigate the move on period, offering 12 months of support to access housing, education, social security and the job market. However, funding for the programme – known as the Refugee Integration and Employment Service – was ended in September 2011. Since then, there has been no Government provided support service for refugees who have been through the asylum system.

The impact of the lack of support was demonstrated through the evidence we received on the experience of refugees immediately after they are granted their status. While waiting for a decision on their asylum application, asylum seekers are unable to work and so most are reliant on the financial support and accommodation provided by the Home Office. After receiving a positive decision on their application, newly recognised refugees are given just 28 days before that support is cut off and they are forced to leave their accommodation.

Throughout our inquiry we were told by refugees and organisations that support them that the 28 day period – known as the “move on” period – is too short. Coupled with the lack of support for refugees to navigate the social security system and private housing market, the brevity of the move on period leaves too many newly recognised refugees homeless and destitute.

The difficulties refugees face are exacerbated, and in many cases caused, by delays experienced receiving the documents they need to be able to register for social security support. We were also told that refugees are often given wrong or incomplete advice by JobCentre staff, leading to delays in refugees accessing support. Additionally, with the national roll out of Universal Credit

– which will mean that most claimants won't receive any payments for at least six weeks after they submit an application – the move on period will not be long enough even for those newly recognised refugees who receive all their documentation in a timely manner.

- We recommend that the Government extend the move on period to at least 50 days, reflecting the time it takes in reality for refugees to access accommodation and financial support, particularly as Universal Credit is rolled out nationally. The length should be kept under review: newly recognised refugees should not experience a gap in their support.
- We recommend that the National Refugee Integration Strategy should address the issues newly recognised refugees face during the move on period, including ensuring that documentation is received as soon as possible.
- We recommend that the Strategy should include reintroducing a support system for newly recognised refugees, similar to the Refugee Integration and Employment Service, drawing on lessons and best practice from the resettlement schemes and the Holistic Integration Service in Scotland. This will help both refugees and local authorities

### Integration

Beyond the crises that can be caused by the move on period, we conclude in our report that the lack of a cross-departmental strategy setting out how all refugees, no matter how they arrived in the UK, can successfully integrate in the UK is regrettable. It is also a barrier to the ability for refugees to fulfil their potential.

Successful integration allows refugees to rebuild their lives and to make full use of their talents and abilities to take part in and contribute to British society. Refugees told us that they wanted to learn English as it is key to integration. However, a theme throughout the inquiry was that the lack of support in learning English, particularly a shortage of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, prevents refugees from being able to access other areas of support, from gaining employment and from taking part in community activities. Despite specific funding the Government have committed for ESOL classes for resettled Syrian refugees, we were told that the drastic reduction in ESOL funding in England – a 55% fall between 2008-09 and 2014-15 – has led to

longer waiting lists, a decline in teaching hours and a lack of classes that meet the needs of refugees.

Some of the positive examples of support being provided to refugees that we were told about were projects and programmes that help refugees gain employment. This includes help writing CVs, converting qualifications that were awarded in other countries, and providing training to help refugees who may need to update or add to their existing skills. But for those refugees who do not have access to this support, navigating and accessing a job market they are unfamiliar with can be a daunting task.

Similarly, we were told that many refugees struggle to access healthcare services they need. Refugees face difficulties registering at GP surgeries when they are asked for documentation they are unable to provide. We are particularly concerned by evidence we received that refugees who have mental health needs or who have been victims of torture are not always referred to specialist treatment providers.

- We recommend that, as part of the National Refugee Integration Strategy, the Government create a strategy for ESOL provision in England, including an increase in funding. The Government should also explore how more refugees can receive support to find employment and to access training.
- We recommend that the Department of Health should work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure refugees are able to access healthcare services and are referred to specialist providers where needed.

## Women and Children

The evidence we received highlighted particular barriers some groups of refugees may face. We were told that women who face destitution and homelessness at the end of the move on period are frequently told to stay with friends, putting them at risk of exploitation. Many refugee women have experienced sexual and gender-based violence either in their home country or during their journey to safety. The evidence we received also shows that refugee women are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence once they arrive in the UK.

Women refugees are often not allocated a National Insurance Number (NINo) as they are not considered to be the “principal applicant” on an asylum application,

and so face further delays being able to access support. Additionally, the timing of ESOL classes, as well as the lack of childcare facilities, can prevent women from being able to learn English.

Child refugees, whether they have arrived separately or with family members, may face particular challenges, including in educational environments that they are unfamiliar with. Many child refugees will have missed considerable parts of their formal education for a number of reasons, including because they have been living in refugee camps or have been travelling in search of safety. We were told that children may need tailored support from teachers and other school staff.

- We recommend that when NINo applications are made as part of an asylum application they should be made by all applicants who would be eligible for a NINo, not just the principal applicant.
- We recommend that as part of the strategy for ESOL, the Government should work with ESOL providers to ensure there is adequate child care available so that women with child caring responsibilities are able to access classes.
- We recommend that the Department for Education should make sure that schools are supported in providing support for refugee children, including through the dissemination of best practice.

## Family Reunion

One of the key things we were told during the inquiry is that for refugees who have arrived in the UK without their family members, being reunited with their loved ones is a priority. Separation, and the worry and distress that causes, can have a negative impact on prospects for integration and on the mental health of refugees in the UK. While adult refugees in the UK can sponsor their closest family members to join them, we were told that the lack of legal aid for family reunion applications, removed by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, can prevent access to this process. We were also told that the current rules prevent refugees from sponsoring adult children, even when that child is dependent on their parent. Additionally, child refugees have no right to family reunion. Children who have been found to be in need of protection are unable to be joined by even their closest relatives. This is, we conclude, a barrier to a child being able to successfully integrate.

- We recommend that as part of the announced review of legal aid changes introduced by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the Government should review the impact the removal of legal aid from family reunion cases has had. If it is found to have had a detrimental impact, legal aid should be reinstated for such cases.
- We recommend that the Government should amend the current rules to allow refugees to sponsor any dependent relatives and to allow unaccompanied children to sponsor their parents and siblings.

appeal to identify why so many decisions are being found to be incorrect. If these issues are being caused by the system being under-resourced, this should be rectified.

## The Asylum System

Although our inquiry focused on refugees once they have been granted status, for those who have been through the asylum system we found that what happens while awaiting a decision on an application can have a significant impact on the future prospects of successfully integrating. The asylum system can be very stressful for applicants, and we are concerned both by the increase in the number of decisions the Home Office makes which are found to be wrong by the courts, and by the length of time the Home Office is taking to make those decisions.

Additionally, people waiting for a decision on their asylum claim can apply for permission to work only if they have been waiting for longer than 12 months. Moreover, they can only apply to work in areas on the Government's shortage occupation list, which includes jobs such as chemical engineers, computer animators and classical ballet dancers. In effect, we judge that the current rules mean that very few, if any, asylum seekers are able to work.

This means that when refugees are granted status, they are unable to provide references, have no prior experience of working in the UK, and may have deskilled and lost their self-esteem.

- We recommend that the restrictions on asylum seekers being able to work should be reduced, including by removing the limitation that asylum seekers are only able to work in jobs on the shortage occupation list.
- We recommend that the Home Office, as a priority, examine why there has been a sharp increase in the number of asylum applications that aren't being decided within the target time of six months. The Home Office should also closely examine those cases overturned on



# Chapter 1:

## Background to the inquiry

1. The topic of refugee protection has rarely, if ever, been of more prolonged interest both within Parliament and in communities up and down the UK. The world is facing what has been called the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War. According to the UN's Refugee Agency, one in every 113 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum<sup>2</sup>. Since the tragic pictures of Alan Kurdi appeared on our television screens and front pages in September 2015, numerous parliamentary committees have held inquiries, several debates have been had, and hundreds of oral and written questions have been tabled on the UK's role in responding to the refugee crisis.

2. The vast majority of this parliamentary activity has been focused on questions regarding how many refugees the UK should support, the pathways refugees have to reach protection, and the support the UK is providing to countries hosting large numbers of refugees. In comparison, virtually no attention has been given to the experience of new refugees in the UK.

3. The purpose of this inquiry was to look at what happens to refugees once they are in the UK and have been recognised as refugees. Legally, individuals granted refugee status have been found in need of international protection under the terms of the 1951 Geneva Convention. We wanted to explore what that protection means in practice for refugees in the UK. As part of this, the terms of reference (see Annex 1) for the inquiry related to the prospects for refugees to integrate successfully in the UK. As a panel, we were keen to learn about what was working well, what wasn't working well, and where improvements could be made.

4. We launched the inquiry in July 2016 with a call for written evidence. We received nearly 100 submissions from refugees, local groups, NGOs and international bodies, as well as over 200 responses from questions

posed to Clinical Commissioning Groups on the services they provide. We followed this up with four oral evidence sessions in Parliament, where we heard from local government, refugee support groups, and most importantly refugees themselves. Members of the panel also visited Nottingham and Bristol to speak to local residents, including refugees, to explore how local communities are responding.

5. In this report, we make a number of recommendations based on the evidence we have received.

### Refugees in the UK

6. A refugee is defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention as someone who:

*“owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”<sup>3</sup>*

The UK has a long history of providing safety to refugees. This has included children brought to the UK through the Kindertransport, supporting Asian Ugandans who had been expelled by Idi Amin, housing Vietnamese boat people, and providing safety to thousands of Bosnians fleeing the Balkans. Refugees with protection in the UK will, broadly speaking, have either made an application for

## Refugees Welcome?

asylum after they arrived in the UK or have travelled to the UK under a resettlement scheme.

7. People who have arrived in the UK and then applied for asylum, but who have not yet received a decision on their application, are referred to as asylum seekers. For the purposes of this inquiry, we focused on the experiences of people who had been granted refugee status. Paragraph 339Q of the Immigration Rules sets out that a person granted refugee status in the UK is issued with a residence permit that is valid for five years and renewable. After five years, refugees can then apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Throughout this report, we refer to refugees as those people who have come through the asylum route or those who have come to the UK under one of the UK's resettlement programmes.

8. Refugees who have come through the asylum route will have arrived in the UK before applying for asylum. They will then have had their application considered by the Home Office and, following extensive interviews and evidence gathering, be found to be a refugee (see Diagram 1: The UK Asylum System). It is not possible to apply for asylum outside of the UK.

9. Refugees who have been resettled to the UK will have travelled directly from countries where they were being hosted. Refugees in need of resettlement are identified by the office of the UN's Refugee Agency, the UN High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR), who then put refugees forward to countries with resettlement programmes, such as the UK. The UK, as a destination country, will carry out security checks before accepting the refugee for resettlement. The UK currently runs four resettlement programmes (see Box 1):

- The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme
- The Gateway Protection Programme
- The Mandate Scheme
- The Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

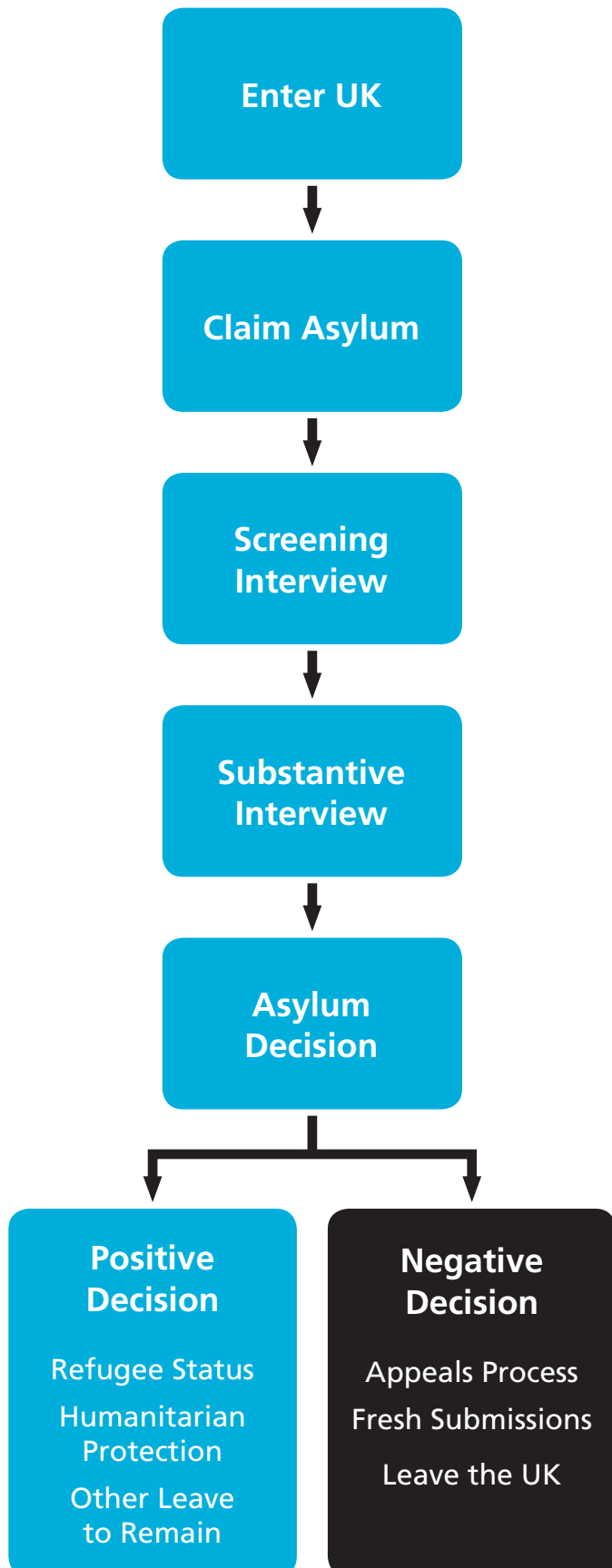
10. Table 1 shows the number of people who have been recognised as refugees having applied for asylum in the UK in each year since 2012. It also shows the number of refugees who have been resettled through each of the separate resettlement programmes over that time.<sup>4</sup> The majority of refugees in the UK will have come through the asylum route. Since the beginning of 2012, over

50,000 refugees have been recognised through the asylum process, compared with fewer than 10,000 people who have been resettled.

**Table 1: New refugees in the UK by route: 2012 to 2016<sup>5</sup>**

Year	Asylum route <sup>6</sup>	Resettlement (see Box 1)			
		Total	Gateway Protection Programme	Mandate Scheme	Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme <sup>7</sup>
2012	7,797	1,039	985	54	z
2013	8,516	967	935	32	z
2014	10,100	787	630	14	143
2015	13,944	1,864	652	18	1,194
2016	9,933	3,549	468	4	3,077
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,290</b>	<b>9,838</b>	<b>4,006</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>5,706</b>

Diagram 1: The UK Asylum System



**Box 1: The UK’s Resettlement Programmes**

**The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme:**

Restricted to Syrian refugees, this programme resettles refugees who have fled Syria and who are currently living in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or Egypt. When it was originally announced in 2014, the Government said it intended to resettle “several hundred” refugees over three years through the programme. In September 2015, the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced this would be expanded, with a target of resettling 20,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the Parliament.

**The Gateway Protection Programme:**

The Gateway Protection Programme was launched in 2004 and resettles refugees from all around the world, including Liberia, Burma, Congo, Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia and Bhutan. There is currently a quota of 750 places on the Gateway Programme each year.

**The Mandate Scheme:** The Mandate resettlement scheme resettles refugees who have been recognised as refugees by the UNHCR and who have a close family member in the UK who is willing to accommodate them. No overall quota is set for the Mandate scheme.

**Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region:**

Launched in April 2016, the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme is planned to resettle 3,000 people by the end of the Parliament. It is specifically targeted at vulnerable children impacted by conflict in the Middle East. Children identified under the scheme will be resettled along with their immediate family. At the time of writing, the Government has not announced when children will first arrive under this programme.

**Community Sponsorship Scheme:** In July 2016, the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd MP, launched a community sponsorship scheme to enable community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses, to support the resettlement of refugees. Under the scheme, community groups can apply to provide housing and integration support to refugees resettled under either the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme or the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme.

### Refugees Welcome?

11. The focus of this inquiry was the experience of refugees once they have been granted protection in the UK. People with refugee status in the UK have been recognised by the UK Government as being in need of international protection and part of that protection should involve supporting refugees to rebuild their lives, including through being integrated into the UK. We discuss what integration involves in more detail in Chapter 3.

12. Between 2000 and 2009, the then governments published three separate refugee integration strategies<sup>8</sup>, with the 2009 strategy explicitly stating that it “applies equally to those who come through the asylum route or are brought to the UK through our resettlement programmes.” Between 2001 and 2006 the Home Office also funded a National Refugee Integration Forum. The Integration Forum was chaired by the Immigration Minister and also included several thematic sub-groups, including employment, education, health and unaccompanied children.<sup>9</sup>

13. Since 2009 there has not been an updated integration strategy. The UNHCR told us that there has also been no “systematic evaluation of the integration of refugees since the Survey of New Refugees in the United Kingdom, between 2005 and 2009, which was published in July 2010.”<sup>10</sup> In February 2012, the Coalition Government did publish a policy paper entitled “Creating the conditions for integration”, but this did not mention refugees or the particular barriers to integration that previous governments had identified refugees as facing.<sup>11</sup> More recently, the Government commissioned review into integration carried out by Dame Louise Casey similarly does not focus on the specific challenges refugees may face.<sup>12</sup>

14. In that time, the Scottish Government has implemented its own integration strategy, *New Scots: Integrating Refugees into Scotland’s Communities 2014-17*.<sup>13</sup> This was developed in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Scottish Refugee Council, refugees and the communities of which they are part. New Scots has regularly reported back on progress regarding its stated outcomes.

15. In the following chapters, we consider the impact of government policy, and the lack of a UK-wide integration strategy, on the experience of refugees in the UK.

# Chapter 2:

## The Move On Period

16. An individual who has applied for asylum in the UK is able to apply to the Home Office to receive accommodation and subsistence support while they are waiting for a decision to be made on their application. When an asylum seeker is successful in their application for asylum, any support they are receiving from the Home Office will stop 28 days after they are told about that decision. This means that any financial support they may have been receiving will stop and if they have also been in Home Office provided accommodation, they will be required to vacate the property. This 28 day period is often referred to as the “move on period”, as it marks the period when a newly recognised refugee is expected to move from Home Office provided support to sourcing their own accommodation and income, either privately or via mainstream welfare support.

17. Asylum support is provided under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. To be eligible for asylum support, an individual must either be destitute or be likely to become destitute within the next 14 days. As defined by section 95 of the 1999 Act, an individual is destitute if:

- a) They do not have adequate accommodation or any means of obtaining it, or
- b) They have adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but they are unable to meet their other essential living needs.

18. Support under section 95 can consist of: subsistence payments to meet essential living needs only; accommodation on a no-choice basis only; or both subsistence payments to meet essential living needs and accommodation on a no-choice basis. At the time of writing, the subsistence payment rate is £36.95 per person per week.<sup>14</sup> The vast majority of asylum seekers receive some form of support from the Home Office. At the end of December 2016, 39,389 asylum seekers

were supported under section 95, 93% of whom were accommodated by the Home Office.<sup>15</sup>

19. Asylum support can be discontinued in a number of circumstances. One of these is when an asylum decision has been determined. Section 94(3) of The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 gives the Home Secretary the power to make regulations prescribing the point at when an asylum decision is deemed to be determined for the purposes of ending support. Since 2002, when an application for asylum is granted – i.e. the asylum applicant has been granted either refugee status or humanitarian protection – the asylum decision is deemed to be determined 28 days after the applicant is notified of this decision.<sup>16</sup>

20. Once granted their refugee status, newly recognised refugees “have immediate access to the labour market and to all key mainstream benefits.”<sup>17</sup> They should be informed of the positive decision on their asylum claim and also be told that their Home Office support will end in 28 days time. Home Office guidance also states a “benefit information leaflet” should be included with the termination letter, which should be “in an appropriate language”.<sup>18</sup>

### Documentation for newly recognised refugees

21. The Home Office have said that “to assist the transition from Home Office support, the person is issued with a Biometric Residence Permit (the evidence they need to prove they can take employment and are eligible to apply for welfare benefits) and a National Insurance number (which helps speed up the processing of a benefits claim)”. Additionally, “Home Office accommodation providers are contractually obliged to notify the local housing authority that a person has been

granted refugee status or other status and of the date their section 95 support will cease.”<sup>19</sup>

**Biometric Residence Permit:** A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is an identity document issued by the government to individuals granted leave to be in the UK, including refugees. As well as showing the holder's name, birthdate and place of birth, it also includes a photo of their face, their fingerprints, their immigration status and whether they can access public funds.<sup>20</sup> As many refugees do not have a passport, the BRP will often be their only form of identification. A BRP should be issued when a newly recognised refugee is informed that their asylum application has been accepted.<sup>21</sup>

**National Insurance number:** A National Insurance number (NINo) is a unique number that helps to track an individual's national contributions or benefits. Having a NINo assists in making timely applications for mainstream benefits – although having a NINo is not necessary to submit a benefit application. For adult refugees who have arrived through the asylum route, they will have undergone a substantive interview in relation to their asylum application, during which their Home Office caseworker may have completed a NINo application. When an asylum claim is granted, the caseworker should then process the NINo application, working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to issue a number.

22. The Home Office say that the Biometric Residence Permit and a National Insurance number (NINo) are issued “to assist the transition”.<sup>22</sup> The evidence we received shows that these are necessary for newly recognised refugees to be able to gain access to finance and housing quickly once their asylum support is ended. So it was therefore worrying that many of those who submitted evidence told us about delays receiving documents and other problems that result in newly recognised refugees becoming destitute.

23. Karam, a refugee from Syria, was living in Home Office accommodation while waiting for a decision on his asylum application. Karam told us about his experience of the move on period when he gave oral evidence to the panel. He said that the first thing he knew was when he received a letter from G4S, the private contractor that managed Karam's Home Office accommodation, telling him that he needed to move out in 28 days. Karam told

us that he had no idea why he had received this letter, and when he asked a G4S housing officer, they were unable to tell him. It wasn't until one week later that he received the letter telling him his application had been granted.<sup>23</sup>

24. Still Human Still Here, a coalition of 79 organisations campaigning for refugees and asylum seekers, said in their written evidence to the inquiry they “had documented that newly recognised refugees consistently end up destitute because their asylum support is cut off after the 28 day move on period expires and this does not give them enough time to access mainstream benefits or start working.”<sup>24</sup> The British Red Cross told us that they had helped over 1,200 destitute new refugees between January and September 2016, and described the move on process as “a real ordeal for new refugees.”<sup>25</sup> Similarly, the No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) reported that of the 1,600 individuals housed by their members in the last year, nearly 3 in 10 were refugees.<sup>26</sup>

**Abdalla Ali:** Abdalla is a refugee from Darfur in Sudan. He claimed asylum in the UK in August 2015 and was granted refugee status a few months afterwards. He received his National Insurance number and his Biometric Residence Permit, but they showed different names for him. He returned his Biometric Residence Permit for it to be corrected, but then didn't receive a corrected version. Abdalla finally received an updated Biometric Residence Permit after many repeated inquiries and getting the help of his Member of Parliament. This was almost eight months after he originally returned the Biometric Residence Permit.

25. The British Red Cross, in their 2014 report *The Move-On Period: an ordeal for new refugees*, identified 23 different factors that can delay and frustrate the ability for a newly recognised refugee to transition from Home Office support to other support during the move on period, and that many refugees may be impacted by several of these.<sup>27</sup> Among these factors are delays in issuing BRPs and NINos. The Merseyside Refugee Support Network told us that at least half of their service users who are new refugees do not receive their documentation in a timely manner.<sup>28</sup> In May 2016, the Refugee Council found that of 11 newly recognised refugees they interviewed two did not receive their BRP within the move on period, and for those who received

their BRP within the 28 days, the average wait was two weeks.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the British Red Cross reported that seven of the 14 refugees they interviewed as part of their report on the move on period received their BRP within seven days of being granted refugee status.<sup>30</sup>

**26. Finding: Given the relatively short nature of the move on period, it is clear that a delay in receiving a BRP can cause further delays in the receipt of other forms of financial support.**

**27. Recommendations: The Home Office should ensure that refugees receive their BRP at the same time as they are notified that their asylum claim has been granted. Additionally, the move on period should not begin for a refugee until they have received their BRP.**

28. Refugees and organisations told us that as well as delays in issuing BRPs, the same is true of NINOs. Additionally, the evidence presented to the panel suggests that there is less clarity regarding NINOs, and the reasons for the delay, compared to BRPs. While it is clear that BRPs are issued by the Home Office, some organisations, including those based in Hull who submitted a joint response, told us “there is continued uncertainty about who is responsible for allocating NINOs.”<sup>31</sup> This confusion appears to come from the fact that while some refugees receive their NINo directly from the Home Office after being granted status, others don’t and need to initiate their own application for a NINo.

29. The evidence we received shows that the confusion stems from the way some refugees will have had an application for a NINo completed during the asylum process, but others will not. While a Home Office caseworker is able to complete a NINo application for an asylum seeker during the substantive interview on an asylum claim (see Diagram 1), the asylum applicant may not have agreed to sign the form. In the Home Office’s guidance, caseworkers are told not to “try to persuade the claimant to sign the NINo application if they are reluctant to do so, or are advised not to by their representative.”<sup>32</sup> The substantive interview is the main interaction between a Home Office case worker and an applicant. As we were told during the visit to Bristol, these interviews can last several hours. The Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration reported in 2016 that straightforward cases would require between two and three hours for the substantive interview. The Chief

Inspector said that in a significant number of cases, the substantive interview lasted “in excess of four hours”.<sup>33</sup>

30. The NINo application is a very minor part of this process and by the time a refugee receives their refugee status, it may have been several months or even years since they had the substantive interview. Additionally, some refugees may already have a NINo, for example if they have previously had permission to work in the UK while having a different immigration status, such as a student.<sup>34</sup> The evidence we received shows that refugees and those supporting them are not always informed or do not know whether a NINo application was successfully completed at the substantive interview.

31. The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council summed up their experience locally:

*“we have found that the timely allocation of a NINo can be hit and miss. Not being in possession of a NINo can result in delays in being able to access welfare benefits by a further few weeks. There are also examples where one member of a family receives their NINo but the others don’t and this consequently delays the benefit claims for the family.”<sup>35</sup>*

32. Those refugees who do receive a NINo from the Home Office often receive it once a significant proportion of the move on period has already passed. The Home Office guidance says that information collected at the substantive interview should be sent to the Department for Work and Pensions when the asylum application has been accepted. According to Robert Goodwill MP, the Immigration Minister, the Department for Work and Pensions aim to return these within seven days, before the NINo is then sent to the new refugee,<sup>36</sup> but the evidence showed that frequently this is not the case. Sami, a refugee from Iraq, gave oral evidence to the inquiry and told us that his NINo was not sent until the day after he was evicted from his Home Office accommodation at the end of the move on period. The NINo was, therefore, sent to a property he was no longer able to access. He did not have accommodation to move into, and so was homeless. Sami did not get his NINo until more than three months had passed since his asylum application had been accepted.<sup>37</sup>

33. The Refugee Council reported that only one of the 11 newly recognised refugees they interviewed received their NINo with their status determination, while all the others who didn't have a NINo previously had to wait for at least three weeks from the time they were given refugee status.<sup>38</sup> Scottish Refugee Council said that 40% of refugees who accessed their services over the last three years did not have a NINo.<sup>39</sup> For those new refugees who apply for their own NINo, the organisations in Hull told us that in their experience this can take up to six weeks.<sup>40</sup>

### NINos and Social Security

34. Asylum seekers are only allowed to work in very limited circumstances,<sup>41</sup> and so very few newly recognised refugees will have been working prior to receiving their refugee status or have any UK-based work experience. Most newly recognised refugees will need support via the social security system before they are able to find paid employment. We were told that the combination of delays in receiving documents and misinformation about the process resulted in many newly recognised refugees not being in receipt of the benefit payments they are entitled to when the move on period comes to an end. In 2016, Scottish Refugee Council reported that newly recognised refugees were waiting, on average, for 24 days from the time they submitted a claim for Jobseekers' Allowance to receiving their first payment. They said this was "too long to fit comfortably within the move on period."<sup>42</sup>

35. While being in receipt of a NINo isn't necessary to apply for benefits – claimants without a NINo do, however, need to show that they are eligible for one – it does have some advantages. According to the Red Cross, one of the key advantages is that an application for benefits can be made online, which eases communication between the JobCentre and the new refugee as JobCentre staff can track the application online.<sup>43</sup>

36. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity both on the part of JobCentre staff and newly recognised refugees about whether benefit applications can be made without a NINo. The Refugee Council and the British Red Cross have both reported JobCentre staff informing newly recognised refugees that a NINo is required before an application for benefits can be started.<sup>44</sup>

**37. Findings: Delays in receiving NINos lead to delays in refugees being able to access the social security system. Part of the problem stems from the way in**

**which NINo applications are handled at the substantive interview. When refugees receive notification that their asylum application has been accepted, there is nothing contained within that to inform them whether they will receive a NINo or whether they need to apply for one. For a substantial number of newly recognised refugees, it may have been several months, if not years, between their substantive interview and the acceptance of their application. It may well be that they are not able to recollect whether at the substantive interview they completed the NINo application or not, particularly given that the substantive interview may have lasted for several hours and can be very stressful.**

**38. Recommendations: We recommend that when the Home Office informs people that their application for asylum has been granted, they should include whether or not that person will be receiving a NINo or if they need to apply for one themselves. Additionally, as the substantive interview is not the most appropriate stage of the asylum process to carry out the NINo application, and details required for a NINo application are all gathered at the initial, or 'screening', interview stage, we also recommend that the NINo application should be completed at the screening interview.**

### Jobcentre staff and refugees

39. As mentioned above, during the inquiry, we were told that JobCentre staff have, on occasion, provided the wrong information to newly recognised refugees. This does not necessarily mean that the right policies aren't in place, more that they are not being used. Chloe Morgan from the Refugee Council told us "What's very frustrating as an advisor is that the useful policies and procedures that do exist are often not followed or even known by [JobCentre staff]."<sup>45</sup>

40. Stephen Hale, the Chief Executive of Refugee Action, reflected on his organisation's experience of working with resettled refugees:

*"We're now resettling refugees in places like Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, which were not dispersal areas and so in those areas the challenge is sometimes*



*exacerbated by the fact that local DWP officers don't have previous experience of working with [refugees]. So there are two levels of problems: the first is that often the systems are very difficult to navigate and to access, but then the second issue is that you need the people on the ground who are processing the application to understand what it is and that's been a challenge for us in new areas.*"<sup>46</sup>

41. Karl Pike from the British Red Cross compared the level of guidance issued to refugees and to JobCentre staff. For refugees, he told us that there is not enough information in a language that they can understand. Mr Pike explained that the information is very text heavy and in English. In comparison, he did not think that a lack of guidance for JobCentre staff was the problem: "There are great reams of guidance given to people who work for JobCentre Plus and the DWP, so much that they can't read all this guidance." He added "I don't think more guidance is going to solve it."<sup>47</sup>

42. Karl Pike also told us that the British Red Cross have suggested that rather than issue ever more guidance, a "more active approach" should be adopted, particularly in areas that will have a large number of refugees. This approach, he suggested, could take the form of posters in staff rooms that clearly set out what individuals are entitled to.

**43. Finding: JobCentre staff who are dealing with refugees do not always provide the right information and or have awareness of the correct procedures. This leads to delays in refugees being able to access support.**

**44. Recommendation: We recommend that, particularly in areas with high numbers of refugees or areas that are accommodating refugees for the first time, the Department for Work and Pensions and the JobCentre should explore active approaches, such as that suggested by the British Red Cross, to ensure staff have all the necessary knowledge they need.**

## Welfare Reform

45. A number of those who gave evidence to the inquiry, including Mike Kaye from Still Human Still Here and Chloe Morgan from the Refugee Council, raised concerns about the impact that welfare reforms may have on newly recognised refugees. Specifically, concerns were raised that the introduction of Universal Credit was being undertaken without considering the impact it would have on newly recognised refugees.

46. Universal Credit is a new benefit which will replace a range of existing benefits and tax credits, including income-based jobseekers allowance, income support, housing benefit and tax credits. Since 2013, Universal Credit has been gradually rolled out across the country, starting with individuals whose claims were deemed to be simple to manage. This comprised of single claimants with no children who were British nationals. In July 2016, it was announced that by September 2018 all new working-age benefits and tax credits claims would be for Universal Credit, and all current claimants would be transferred to Universal Credit by March 2022.<sup>48</sup>

47. One of the differences between Universal Credit and existing social security is that it is usually paid monthly in arrears rather than fortnightly. Additionally, on the assumption that claimants will have wages to tide them over, there is a seven day waiting period following the making of a claim for Universal Credit that further delays the process. As a result, according to the Government's website, the first payment of Universal Credit will be received six weeks after an application has been completed.<sup>49</sup>

48. Still Human Still Here, in their written evidence, pointed out that the six week timeframe "will make it impossible for refugees to receive mainstream benefits before their asylum support ends even if they completed the form on the same day as they received their status."<sup>50</sup> As newly recognised refugees stop receiving asylum support 28 days, or four weeks, after receiving their status, there will be a gap of at least two weeks before a payment of Universal Credit will be received. Additionally, according to the Money Advice Service, claims for Universal Credit are expected to be made online.<sup>51</sup> However, Chloe Morgan from the Refugee Council told us that online applications cannot be submitted without providing a NINo and bank account details.<sup>52</sup> As discussed in this chapter, both of these requirements can be difficult for newly recognised refugees to meet. Chloe Morgan

told us for those refugees who are in areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out to all new claimants, she has been unable to find a solution to this problem.<sup>53</sup>

**49. Finding: The impact of Universal Credit on newly recognised refugees is, at the time of writing, only just beginning to emerge. As the initial roll out of Universal Credit did not include claims from refugees, these issues were not picked up. What is clear is that the current 28 day move on period will not be compatible with the six week wait for Universal Credit. Newly recognised refugees, who will have been unable to accumulate savings while in receipt of asylum support, will, therefore, face a period without an income. While this may be unintended, it will exacerbate the problems refugees face during the move on period. Additionally, the inability to submit an online application for Universal Credit without first entering the details of a bank account will cause additional delays.**

**50. Recommendations: We recommend that the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions should ensure that the first payment of Universal Credit is made within the move on period. This might be achieved either through extending the length of the move on period, or, failing that, bringing forward the timing of the first payment. We also recommend that the online application form for Universal Credit should be changed so that it can be submitted without having to provide bank details.**

51. Some groups are exempt from the seven day waiting period, in particular people that the Government believe don't have resources to fall back on, including those who are terminally ill, have been a victim of domestic violence within the last six months, or have left prison in the last month.<sup>54</sup> The exemptions exist because, as the Government have argued, "the fundamental principle behind the waiting days policy is that social security is not designed to provide cover for moving between jobs or brief spells of unemployment."<sup>55</sup>

**52. Finding: Refugees who had been in receipt of Home Office support and who were not allowed to work while awaiting for a decision on their asylum application will not have resources to fall back on.**

**53. Recommendation: Newly recognised refugees should be added to the list of groups exempt from the seven day waiting period for Universal Credit.**

### Bank accounts

54. Many evidence submissions raised problems newly recognised refugees face in opening bank accounts.<sup>56</sup> During the move on period, opening a bank account will usually be a priority for newly recognised refugees, particularly as an account is usually needed in order to receive social security payments. The groups from Sheffield and from Hull told us that banks often don't accept Biometric Residence Permits as a form of identification, instead insisting that a passport be provided. As mentioned above, most refugees will not have a passport and their BRP will be their only form of identification. These should be accepted by banks, but we were told that many newly recognised refugees struggle to find a bank willing to accept their identification. Additionally, Victor told us that after receiving his refugee status he tried to open a bank account but was refused as he did not have a NINo.<sup>57</sup>

55. We also received reports of newly recognised refugees being asked to provide proof of address before being able to open an account. Many people who have opened a bank account in the UK will be familiar with being asked to provide copies of utility bills. As refugees who were in Home Office accommodation while waiting for a decision on their application will not have been responsible for paying utility bills, this will not be an option. Additionally, newly recognised refugees have to move at the end of the 28 day move on period and as a result many experience homelessness. Providing a proof of address in these circumstances can prove a barrier that is impossible to overcome.

56. Financial inclusion has been a focus for the Treasury over the last four years, a key factor of which has been to improve access to bank accounts.<sup>58</sup> In their final report, the Financial Inclusion Commission noted that although the Financial Conduct Authority provides guidance on documentation that can be used to prove identity, bank staff are wary of accepting documents they are less familiar with.<sup>59</sup> The evidence we received shows that this is the case for many newly recognised refugees. In the words of the Liverpool Asylum Seekers and Refugees Association, "refugees end up touring round the banks."<sup>60</sup>

**57. Finding: Refugees often face problems opening bank accounts, frequently as a result of being unable to provide documentation banks ask for. Being unable to open a bank account can result in newly recognised refugees being unable to receive social security payments.**

**58. Recommendation: We recommend that the Financial Conduct Authority should issue clear guidance to banks regarding the documentation that newly recognised refugees will have. Banks should ensure their staff receive comprehensive training so that they are familiar with the type of identify documents refugees will have access to, as part of the wider work to ensure financially excluded people have access to financial services.**

## Housing

59. At the end of the move on period, those newly recognised refugees who have been accommodated by the Home Office during the asylum process will need to have found new housing for themselves as well as any family members. During the 28 day move on period, newly recognised refugees need to find new accommodation that is both affordable and suitable for their needs. Many of the organisations who provided evidence to the inquiry raised problems with finding accommodation as one of the greatest challenges refugees face.

60. The Bristol Refugee Forum told us that as refugees cannot anticipate when they will get their asylum decision, it is “impossible to plan for this crisis.” They listed the barriers newly recognised refugees face in accessing the private rented sector:

- No savings
- No credit rating
- Frequent lack of access to Deposit Bond schemes
- Usually no network of friends or relations in the UK who can provide support
- Little or no knowledge of how the private rented sector operates, including legal housing standards<sup>61</sup>

61. According to the Refugee Council, newly recognised refugees are unlikely to have savings available to cover a deposit and first month’s rent, which are both usually required to secure private rented accommodation, due to

the way refugees will have been supported during the asylum process. They said that “on asylum support it is impossible to build up sufficient savings to pay deposits and rent in advance, indeed to do so would mean an individual would no longer be eligible for asylum support.”<sup>62</sup> As noted above, asylum seekers who receive financial support from the Home Office are given enough money to cover their essential living needs, which is currently paid at £36.96 per person per week. According to the Refugee Council, even if asylum seekers were able to save some of this money, as they are required to be destitute before they are able to receive asylum support those savings would result in the asylum seeker no longer being eligible for support. Additionally, as most asylum seekers are unable to work, they are unable to build up a deposit through employment.<sup>63</sup>

62. We were also told of instances where refugees struggled to find rented accommodation due to the ‘right to rent’ provisions of the Immigration Act 2014.<sup>64</sup> Although refugees have the right to rent, as the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council told us, “many refugees have difficulty accessing accommodation as landlords do not generally accept a residency permit as proof of residency and want to see a passport as proof of immigration status.”<sup>65</sup> According to Still Human Still Here, some landlords are reluctant to rent their property to anyone who does not appear to be British.<sup>66</sup>

**63. Finding: The ‘right to rent’ provisions of the Immigration Act 2014 have led to some refugees finding it harder to rent in the private rented sector as landlords are wary of accepting the documentation that refugees will have.**

**64. Recommendation: The Home Office must ensure that refugees are not excluded from the private rented sector due to the ‘right to rent’ law.**

## Public sector accommodation

65. The difficulties accessing private rented accommodation led the organisations from Leeds to say in their written evidence that the “reality for many new refugees is that they can only join the end of a long queue for Council accommodation or Housing Association properties.”<sup>67</sup> The stresses on local authority housing provision are well documented, and many newly recognised refugees, particularly single men, will not be found to be in priority need as defined by the Housing Act

1996 when seeking homelessness assistance.<sup>68</sup> Freedom from Torture told us that this is often the case “even if they are a torture survivor.”<sup>69</sup>

66. The Refugee Council have also reported that for those refugees who are found to be in priority need, often due to having children, many are being housed outside of the area they had been living in whilst waiting for a decision on their application. This makes it harder to integrate. The Refugee Council explains:

*“This represents yet another move in their life which [refugees] have little control over, a barrier to building and maintaining new relationships which can support their integration, and another school move for children further disrupting their education.”<sup>70</sup>*

**Awate:** Awate, a refugee from Eritrea, became homeless after being recognised as a refugee. He was told that there was no statutory support available until he had been found to be homeless. Due to a lack of English language skills, Awate found filling out forms difficult and reported his local authority being unhelpful. He was eventually introduced to the local City of Sanctuary group, who were then able to find him housing with a host family through Host Oxford.<sup>71</sup>

### Local connection

67. Evidence submitted to the inquiry said that the ‘local connection’ test for local authority housing meant that refugees were unable to move to live near friends or family, or to another location of their choice, including where there might be more housing or employment opportunities available.<sup>72</sup> We were told this was because newly recognised refugees in the move on period will usually have been living in asylum accommodation that had been allocated on a no choice basis. Since 2000, asylum seekers have been dispersed around the UK. They are dispersed to local authorities who have agreed to be part of the dispersal scheme.<sup>73</sup> As a result, we were told that newly recognised refugees will have a local connection to an area they had no choice about living in in the first place. The exception to this is in Scotland, where refugees are not restricted by the local connection test.<sup>74</sup>

### Homelessness

68. As a result of not being able eligible for local authority housing and facing barriers to the private rented sector, the evidence we received showed that many newly recognised refugees face periods of homelessness, with many having to rely on emergency support and the limited support available from various charities. The Refugee Council reflected on this in their written evidence:

*“Unsurprisingly then, many of our clients are street homeless and/or without any income at all at some point after receiving notification of their status as a refugee. Even those who manage to stay with friends have to move around as they are unable to tell a friend how long they will be there. The ‘lucky’ ones access night shelters in the winter months and it is not unusual for them to rely solely on day centres for a hot meal every day. Many get into debt or rely on ‘hardship’ payments from charities such as the Refugee Council. This is not a sustainable situation and of course is extremely damaging to the mental health and resilience of a person who has already suffered so much.”<sup>75</sup>*

69. Kolbassia, from the Survivors Speak Out network, told us that after he got his refugee status he was found to not be in priority need and was on the streets for three nights and three days, during which time he slept on the night bus – the overnight bus services in London. He explained:

*“You sit on the back, where it is warm, where the engine is. You just go from one terminal bus stop to another terminal bus stop until the morning.”<sup>76</sup>*

70. One refugee, quoted in the evidence submitted by the Liverpool Asylum Seekers and Refugees Association, reflected on the poor quality of accommodation they found themselves in:

*“I sleep in a room with three other people. I have real trouble with people in the same room as me after I go out of college and the people in the room have mental health problems and not sleeping in the night and I can’t do anything about it.”<sup>77</sup>*

## Integration loans

71. Newly recognised refugees are able to apply for an interest free integration loan to assist with housing costs, as well as household items or education and training for work.<sup>78</sup> Lord Bassam of Brighton, at the time a Government Whip in the House of Lords, set out the aim of the loan scheme when it was introduced in 2007. Speaking in the House of Lords he said:

*“The scheme is designed to ensure that there is adequate financial support for those who have been granted humanitarian status here as a refugee and to whom we owe a duty to assist with integration.”<sup>79</sup>*

72. The Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration are responsible for deciding whether to accept an application for an integration loan and the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the payment and the recovery of the loan.<sup>80</sup> The minimum payment is £100 and while there is not a statutory maximum payment, the Home Office’s guidance suggests it is £1,000. The exact loan repayment rate is calculated by the Department for Work and Pensions and is dependent on the individual’s circumstances.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, in their report *England’s Forgotten Refugees*, the Refugee Council say that in recent years, “organisations supporting refugees have noted that people ... are encouraged by Home Office staff to only apply for £500.”<sup>82</sup>

73. Table 2 shows the number and value of integration loans that have been paid out in the last five years. While the number of applications for integration loans has increased in recent years, in 2015/16 it was still below the 4,000 applications the then Labour Government assumed would be made each year when it introduced the scheme in 2007.<sup>83</sup>

74. Organisations supporting refugees, including those we spoke to during the visit to Bristol, cited two significant problems with the payment of integration loans. Firstly, the amount received is often not enough to cover the deposit and advanced rent required to secure private rented accommodation.<sup>84</sup> Secondly, for those refugees who do receive loans, they are often not received within the 28 day move on period.

**Table 2:**

**Refugee Integration Loan payments – 2011/12 to 2015/16**

Years	No. Applications received	No. Applications paid	Total value of loans	Mean value
2011/12	2,552	1,766	£814,551	£461
2012/13	2,125	1,451	£553,685	£382
2013/14	2,205	1,506	£619,330	£388
2014/15	2,534	1,457	£704,409	£483
2015/16	3,971	2,525	£1,216,095	£482

Source: House of Commons, Written question 39221, 8 June 2016

75. We were also told that there were delays in being able to apply for an integration loan as applications cannot be made without a NINo. As the Home Office’s guidance states:

*“The application is not valid without a NINo. The application should therefore be refused on the basis that it is not valid. If a joint application, both applicants need to have a NINo.”<sup>85</sup>*

76. As discussed above, newly recognised refugees often do not receive their NINo within the first two weeks of the move on period, delaying the point at which a newly recognised refugee is able to apply for an integration loan. Organisations report that the time taken to process an application means that the loan will not be paid before the end of the move on period. The Merseyside Refugee Support Network told us that loans can take around three or four weeks to be paid. While the Home Office does not collect information on the decision making times for an integration loan,<sup>86</sup> a response to a Freedom of Information request in September 2015 indicated that on the 26 August 2015, the Home Office were working on applications received on 5 June 2015.<sup>87</sup> This means the Home Office were deciding applications of loans that had been made 58 working days earlier. As the organisations we spoke to in Bristol told us, integration loans take too long to process and are too small in value to help with securing housing at the end of the move on period.

77. As a result, newly recognised refugees are frequently unable to use integration loans in order to help secure private rented accommodation. As the Refugee Council told us, “the time it takes to process the claim and the level of financial assistance means that in reality this initiative is not currently of any practical use to most of our clients.”<sup>88</sup>

**78. Finding: Integration loans have the potential to help newly recognised refugees access the private rented sector by assisting with covering the initial costs. However, they will only be able to fulfil this potential if they are payable within the move on period and are large enough to cover initial housing costs.**

**79. Recommendations: The Home Office should fast track applications for integration loans where the money will be used to cover housing costs. The maximum amount payable as a loan should be monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure newly recognised refugees are able use the loan to cover their deposit and first month’s rent.**

### The impact of the problems associated with the move on period

80. The evidence we received illustrated the stress many newly recognised refugees experience during the move on period, and that many refugees experience destitution at the end of it. The Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) reminded us of how serious the consequences can be. They told us about a tragic incident which took place in 2010. A baby, known as Child EG, starved to death after his mother had been unable to access suitable housing, benefits and support following being granted asylum. In their written evidence, ILPA quoted a finding from the Westminster Council Safeguarding Board Serious Case Review:

*“11.1.8 An initial post mortem examination on 10.03.10 found there was no food in EG’s stomach or digestive tract. EG was described by the paediatric pathologist as ‘severely underweight and dehydrated’ and he concluded that ‘this was clearly the immediate cause of death’.”<sup>89</sup>*

81. EG’s mother died two days after her son, having initially been arrested on suspicion of neglect.<sup>90</sup> She had developed a rare brain infection, which had left her unconscious at the time of her son’s death. The Case Review recommended:

*“5.1.4 Westminster Local Safeguarding Children Board should write to the National Asylum Support Service and Department for Work & Pensions to express its concern about the adverse consequences on vulnerable children and the resulting additional pressure on local professional agencies which are triggered in the transitional period between withdrawal of [Home Office support] and entitlement to Benefits.”<sup>91</sup>*

### Parliamentary calls to extend the move on period

82. A constant theme in the evidence we received was that organisations and individuals felt that the move on period should be extended. For example, Still Human Still Here recommended that there should be “a seamless transition between asylum and mainstream support or, at a minimum, extend the 28 day move on period for newly recognised refugees to between 42-49 days.”<sup>92</sup> The submission from the groups in Stoke-on-Trent calls for the move period to be “at least 40 days to end the destitution of new refugees.”<sup>93</sup>

83. Similarly, there have been a number of calls from within Parliament for the move on period to be extended. In December 2015, the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee raised concerns regarding the length of the move on period. In their report *Benefit Delivery*, the Committee said:

*“We question why the “move-on” period for new refugees is only 28 days, when it is clear from research conducted by charities and the Government that it is in many cases insufficient. We recommend the DWP conduct an immediate investigation into the “move-on” period and work with the Home Office to amend the length of time if necessary.”<sup>94</sup>*

84. Following this recommendation, the length of the move on period was subject to amendments tabled to the Immigration Act 2016. During the Committee Stage in the House of Lords, Baroness Lister, a member of the inquiry panel, tabled an amendment which would have extended the move on period to 40 days. Baroness Hamwee tabled a separate amendment, but with a similar aim. Baroness Hamwee's amendment sought to ensure that asylum support remained in place until a time where the removal of support would not leave the refugee destitute.<sup>95</sup>

85. In response to the amendments, Lord Bates, who at the time was a Home Office Minister, said that while the Government were aware of the problems, the solution was "not about simply adding days to the end and finding that even that is not enough... We need to look at the whole system so that people get the care they need when they need it and the system works effectively."<sup>96</sup>

86. Lord Bates added to this during the Report Stage debate, again in response to an amendment tabled by Baroness Lister:

*"Our investigations into this show that there are two main reasons for delays. First, there is a lack of awareness among refugees of the need to apply for welfare benefits as soon as they are granted refugee status... Secondly, the DWP research identified occasions on which a lack of awareness among staff of the correct processes contributed to the problem. Updated guidance and instructions have been issued to DWP front-line staff to address this. We welcome the Work and Pensions Committee's report on benefit delivery published on 21 December 2015, which recommends further work in this area. DWP will respond shortly to the report but intends to carry out an evaluation later this year of the impact of the improvements I have described."<sup>97</sup>*

87. Lord Bates added that if the evaluation found that it was necessary to extend the move on period then the Government would return to Parliament with regulations to do just that. The Government's response to the Work and Pensions' Committee, which was published after the debate on the amendments, confirmed this.<sup>98</sup> When asked about the evaluation by Thangam Debbonaire MP,

the Chair of the Inquiry, Damian Hinds MP, a Minister at the Department for Work and Pensions, said:

*"The Department carried out an internal review in 2016. This confirmed the findings of an earlier DWP/Home Office review into why a significant number of asylum seeking refugees who are granted leave to remain, do not have benefits in payment at the end of their 28 day period of asylum support. The key finding was that they do not contact DWP early enough to enable their benefit claim to be processed before Home Office support ends.*

*"These internal reviews are informing a DWP/Home Office pilot of an assisted transition from asylum support to benefits. The Department will write to the Work and Pensions Select Committee with an update later this year."<sup>99</sup>*

88. Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Work and Pensions, provided further information about the pilot referred to by Damian Hinds:

*"The pilot aims to assist asylum applicants who have been granted leave to remain in the UK to make contact with DWP at the earliest opportunity. Once a customer who has been granted leave to remain in the UK ceases to be eligible for UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) financial support they will be contacted by UKVI to establish whether they would like any assistance with making an appointment with DWP.*

*"If they indicate that they would need assistance then UKVI will contact DWP on their behalf to make an appointment for them to attend their nearest jobcentre. UKVI will relay the details of this appointment back to the customer and will ensure that they are aware of the information that they need to take with them.*

*“The pilot is expected to run to the end of February 2017 and will be reviewed to determine if this additional support has facilitated a better transition from asylum support to mainstream benefits. This will then inform the length of support UKVI should provide to all asylum applicants who are granted leave to remain.”<sup>100</sup>*

89. We look forward to learning more about the impact of the process being piloted. However, it is not clear what impact the support will have if delays in issuing documents, problems with opening bank accounts, and the inbuilt delay in the receipt of payments of Universal Credit are not also addressed. Furthermore, In Scotland, where there is an integration strategy (which we discuss in more detail in Chapter 4), the evidence shows that there is an average of 24 days between an application for Jobseekers Allowance being made and the first payment being received. As the review of the integration strategy says, this is “too long to fit comfortably within the move on period.”<sup>101</sup>

90. For too many refugees, the joy and relief that comes with having their asylum claim accepted is all too soon overtaken by the stress and despair at trying to access social security and housing. The 28 day self-imposed time period for the various Government agencies to issue the documents and complete the application processes needed to ensure refugees are supported is clearly too short. Even if newly recognised refugees were to receive all their documentation at the same time as they received notification of their asylum acceptance, issues relating to opening bank accounts and accessing private rented accommodation would leave newly recognised refugees at risk of destitution. Additionally, as Universal Credit is rolled out nationally, a 28 day move on period will not correlate with the six week minimum wait refugees will face before they receive their first payment.

**91. Findings: The move on period for newly recognised refugees has been set at 28 days since 2002. There appears to be no rationale for why the move on period is this length. The evidence presented to us is that 28 days is not long enough for newly recognised refugees to migrate to other forms of support. The Government have accepted that there are problems with the system, and we welcome the current pilot. However, while we agree with Lord**

**Bates that increasing the length of the move on period is not the complete solution to the current problems, and that just doing so may still mean a smaller number of newly recognised refugees find themselves destitute at a later date, the evidence we have received strongly suggests it is necessary.**

**92. Recommendation: We recommend that the Government extend the move on period to at least 50 days, reflecting the time it takes in reality for refugees to access accommodation and financial support, especially with the introduction of Universal Credit. The length should be kept under review: newly recognised refugees should not experience a gap in their support.**

### Comparison with resettled refugees

93. During the inquiry, we were told that the experience of newly recognised refugees, and the problems they face in accessing housing and social security, is very different from refugees who come to the UK through one of the resettlement schemes described in Chapter 1. Refugees who come to the UK through one of the resettlement programmes are provided with housing and caseworker support. Syrian refugees arriving through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme receive a pre-departure cultural orientation carried out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) before they leave for the UK. On arrival, refugees are met at the airport and then taken to the accommodation that has been secured by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for registering resettled refugees for health and education services, welfare benefits, and providing English language classes (a topic we discuss in detail in the next section). Resettled refugees also receive a welcome pack of groceries on arrival, as well as an allowance of £200 per person from the local authorities to cover the period before welfare benefits are paid.<sup>102</sup>

94. For refugees who have gone through the asylum process, we were told how that support is not available. When asked about this in the House of Lords, Home Office Minister Baroness Williams of Trafford replied that “Those granted refugee status are given access to the labour market and benefits and encouraged to access organisations that can assist with integration.”<sup>103</sup> The evidence that we received, and which we have discussed above, shows that this current approach fails to provide newly recognised refugees with the support they need.



95. During the inquiry, a number of organisations raised a scheme, funded by central government, which previously existed to support refugees to navigate the move on period. The scheme, known as the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES), ran from 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2011. Delivered through regional contracts, RIES offered a 12 month service incorporating three elements:

- Advice and support to newly recognised refugees to address critical needs such as housing education and access to welfare benefits
- Advice to help refugees enter the job market as soon as possible
- A mentoring service to offer newly recognised refugees to be matched with a mentor from the receiving community<sup>104</sup>

96. RIES was available to all newly recognised refugees over the age of 18. Within a few days of getting their positive decision, refugees were offered the advice and support of a personal case manager, who developed a personal integration plan and could help the newly recognised refugee meet their urgent needs. The organisations who delivered RIES, such as the Refugee Council and Refugee Action, were paid on a per person basis.

97. During the three years RIES ran, 12,464 refugees were helped by the service, at a total cost of just under £26m, equivalent to around £2,000 per refugee.<sup>105</sup> When funding for the service was stopped in 2011, the reason given was that it was in line with the need to reduce spending across Government. Baroness Neville-Jones, then a Minister of State at the Home Office, told the House of Lords:

*“The Refugee Integration and Employment Service contracts expire in September 2011 in line with the agreed contract term. In the context of the Government’s strategy to tackle the fiscal deficit there is a need to make significant savings across the UK Border Agency, and it is not possible to fund a stand-alone refugee integration service beyond the expiry of the contracts.”<sup>106</sup>*

98. The lack of an integration programme, and of automatic referral to relevant organisations, has led to newly recognised refugees who require support in navigating the move on period having to find that support themselves. Nina Murray from Scottish Refugee Council said that this was the vast majority of refugees, even including the 70% of Scottish Refugee Council’s service users who are very resilient and “just need a bit of guidance to understand the systems”. She told us that 87% of their service users required some advocacy support “just to access basic entitlements.”<sup>107</sup>

99. Jonathan, part of the Survivors Speak Out network, said he was “jumping up and down” when he got his refugee status, but then found it very difficult to secure accommodation by the end of the move on period, especially without support. He described the number of decisions he was expected to make during that time, saying that it was like “everything coming at once”.<sup>108</sup> During the panel’s visit to Nottingham, the refugees we met told us that they often came into contact with support organisations only having heard of them from friends. Chloe Morgan, from the Refugee Council, told us that this had also resulted in a postcode lottery, with refugees receiving different levels of support depending on where they were in the UK.<sup>109</sup>

100. The immediate problems faced by newly recognised refugees who have come through the asylum route, as described in this chapter, stand in stark contrast to the support provided for resettled refugees. While resettled refugees may face difficulties in terms of adjusting to being in an unfamiliar country, they do not face periods of homelessness and destitution. We agree with the Home Affairs Select Committee who said:

*“Individuals granted asylum in this country must not be forgotten amidst the attention paid to refugees being resettled from the Middle East. They too will have fled abuse, torture and conflict and are equally deserving of the right to be treated with respect and dignity.”<sup>110</sup>*

**101. Findings: Those refugees who have come through the asylum route will have faced the same persecution and violence as those who are resettled. That two refugees who could have fled from the same country, the same town, even the same neighbourhood could have such different**

experiences of what it means to be a refugee in the UK is unacceptable. The lack of support provided to people who have recently been recognised as refugees having applied for asylum in the UK is a significant contributing factor to these differing experiences. The support provided through the UK's resettlement programmes and the Holistic Integration Service in Scotland provide examples of good practice that could be replicated.

**102. Recommendation:** In addition to increasing the length of the move on period to 50 days, we recommend that the Government should re-introduce a programme of support to newly recognised refugees similar to that provided by the Refugee Integration and Employment Service. The support should include the provision of a caseworker to help and advise newly recognised refugees during the move on period.

# Chapter 3:

## Integration after the Move On Period

103. In the last chapter, we discussed the move on period and the risk of destitution newly recognised refugees face after receiving their status. Many of the services and much of the support we were told about by refugee organisations can be described as crisis management: support is aimed at avoiding homelessness, making sure refugees can financially support themselves and their families in the immediate future, and overcoming the barriers to these aims.

104. In this chapter we look at the longer term experiences of refugees and the communities they live in. Much of what is discussed in this chapter may be referred to as aspects of integration. Since we launched this inquiry in July 2016, the subject of integration has become more prevalent in public discourse. The publication of Louise Casey's review into opportunity and integration (the Casey Review)<sup>111</sup> received much attention in December 2016. The Casey Review was commissioned by the then Prime Minister David Cameron, and looked at "integration and opportunity in isolated and deprived communities."<sup>112</sup> The contribution of the Casey Review was added to by the interim report of the APPG on Social Integration in January 2017.<sup>113</sup> However, neither of these reports specifically address the question of refugee integration and the particular barriers to integration that refugees in the UK face.

### The process of integration

105. We are aware that integration means different things to different people. In the Casey Review, several examples of definitions that have been used are set out, and Dame Casey told the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee "I don't think it is easy to just say, 'This is the definition of integration.' I think that is one of the things that is very difficult to do."<sup>114</sup>

106. In their written evidence to the panel, the UNHCR offered a definition of integration related specifically to refugees:

*"the end product of a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process with three interrelated dimensions: a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension."*<sup>115</sup>

107. The Refugee Council, in their 2004 publication 'Agenda for Integration', similarly defined integration as a two-way process. They said the process "places demands on both the receiving society and on the refugee."<sup>116</sup>

### How members of Survivors Speak Out describe integration<sup>117</sup>

*"the ability to feel at ease in the new country whilst also not forgetting your own culture"*

*"when you feel really proud to be British"*

*"being able to participate in social life here and be part of the community"*

*"it's not just about becoming part of the culture but rather taking up the customs of the community"*

*"the system hasn't made it easy for us. Integration seems more about fitting in with British people than feeling comfortable in the UK".*

108. However it is defined, we understand integration as a two-way process between refugees and host communities. Integration requires willingness on the part of the refugee to adapt to their new host society, and to take advantage of the opportunities that will allow them to do that successfully. Successful integration requires host communities to provide those opportunities and ensure

refugees are able to access them, and this should occur within a non-hostile environment. It is about community empowerment, as well as community cohesion. Integration is not, nor should it be, synonymous with assimilation. Refugees come to the UK from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds and they should not be required to relinquish their cultural identity. Successful integration allows refugees to rebuild their lives and to make full use of their talents and abilities to take part in and contribute to British society. This includes economic, social and cultural contributions.

109. The refugees we spoke to told us of their desire to be able to contribute. Many had jobs and livelihoods in the countries they had been forced to leave. They had been through much to reach the UK and now want the opportunity to rebuild their lives and integrate here. Much of the evidence we received told us of the barriers to successful integration, as well as examples of where support is being provided to facilitate integration. Among these barriers was the impact of the move on period discussed in the previous chapter. As Chloe Morgan from the Refugee Council told us:

*“I think that there’s a short term crisis support and a long term integration issue that we would need to be thinking about at the same time... that experience of destitution and homelessness really sends people back and really ruins the initial start to being integrated in the UK.”<sup>118</sup>*

110. We agree that the problems identified as being created by the short time newly recognised refugees are given to transition during the move on period, and the lack of support in doing so, are in themselves a barrier to the long term prospects of integration. In the previous chapter, we made recommendations for changes to the way the move period currently operates. In the rest of this chapter, we discuss other factors that were identified as being able to act as a barrier to successful integration.

### English language

111. A recurring theme throughout the evidence we received was that not having English language proficiency was a barrier to integration.<sup>119</sup> Lilav, a refugee from Syria, told us “language is the most important thing.”<sup>120</sup> Similarly, during our visit to Nottingham, we were told by

Citizens UK Nottingham that the provision of English language teaching classes was the subject that came up most frequently during their research.<sup>121</sup> It was clear from the evidence we received that being able to speak, write and read in English is key to being able to access support, to gaining employment and to taking part in community activities. As Refugee Action referred to it in their written evidence, “attaining a sufficient level of English is the key that unlocks all other aspects of integration for refugees”.<sup>122</sup>

112. From the evidence we received there are two main aspects to refugees being able to improve their English language skills: the formal provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and informal opportunities for people to speak and practice their English, especially with native English speakers. There is not a specific entitlement to support for funding for ESOL classes for refugees above and beyond the entitlement for any other individual who meet the eligibility criteria. In England, people in receipt of various means tested benefits are eligible for fee remission for ESOL courses up to and including level 2, equivalent to a GCSE at grade C or above.<sup>123</sup> This includes refugees in receipt of job-seekers allowance. A number of those who submitted evidence to the inquiry told us that the provision of ESOL does not meet the need. ESOL is a devolved matter, and Refugee Action told us that there isn’t an ESOL strategy in all nations of the UK. They said that “England and Northern Ireland – unlike Scotland and Wales – currently have no strategy to provide a coherent framework for ESOL objectives or to measure the impact of the provision.”<sup>124</sup>

113. Refugee Action told us that ESOL funding has been drastically reduced in recent years. In England, government funding for ESOL fell by 55% between 2008-09 and 2014-15. They said that “these cuts have led to a growth in waiting lists, reduction in teaching hours, and an overall increase in barriers to English language teaching for groups including refugees”.<sup>125</sup> Stephen Hale, the Chief Executive of Refugee Action, told us why he felt ESOL provision was not being addressed by the Government:

*“First and foremost the failure of the Government to provide English language support for refugees is a result of Whitehall failure. It’s not that a Minister sat down one day and said ‘I know, let’s decide not to teach*

*refugees English', it's simply there is not a political champion for that – there is no Minister that's leading on finding a solution for that.*<sup>126</sup>

114. Refugee Action told us about the impact of the lack of provision:

- In some places, waiting lists for ESOL can be very long. One provider reported having a waiting list longer than two years, with 1,200 people on the list;
- Many refugees have no provision in their local area, meaning they have to travel long distances to attend classes;
- Where there is provision, often there are not enough teaching hours available;
- Refugees are placed in ESOL classes that do not match their level of proficiency;
- Women have been especially impacted due to factors such as child caring responsibilities.<sup>127</sup>

**Table 3: Participation in ESOL by all learners and funding for ESOL – 2005/06 to 2014/15**

Years	Participation	Funding
2005/06	272,700	~
2006/07	214,000	~
2007/08	193,300	~
2008/09	188,700	~
2009/10	178,600	£203m
2010/11	163,600	£169m
2011/12	139,400	£117m
2012/13	146,200	£128m
2013/14	139,200	£120m
2014/15	131,100	£104m

Sources: Participation: House of Lords, Written Question HL5156, 11 Feb 2016; Funding: House of Lords, Written Question HL5306, 4 Feb 2016

115. Table 3 indicates the reduction in participation of ESOL classes that has accompanied the reduction in funding. This does not capture the full picture, as the evidence we received shows that charities and other not-for-profit organisations have attempted to meet some of the excess demand. During the course of the inquiry we heard of many examples where English language classes are being provided by charities, faith groups, community organisations and other similar organisations. Action Language, a project providing free ESOL classes run by the charity Action Foundation, told us that they had students referred to them by Newcastle and Gateshead colleges as neither were able to meet the demand for courses from eligible refugees.<sup>128</sup> The majority of this provision is only able to be provided due to the work of volunteers. This is welcome, but not adequate.

116. Action Language told us that frequently the ESOL classes that are available do not cater to the needs of refugees. They said that the most common level they provide is at pre-entry, which “caters for those with no language ability as well as for students who, despite perhaps having picked up some oral communication ability, may struggle with reading and writing English.”<sup>129</sup> During our visit to Bristol, Karen from the British Life and English Language Programme (BRILL), provided by Bristol Refugee Rights, told us that all refugees are different, and have very different levels of education background. Karen told us that the reduction in ESOL provision had had a big impact in Bristol, with many people finding themselves on a waiting list for a local college, before potentially being able to access classes provided through BRILL.

117. Similarly, during the visit to Bristol, we were told about the problems for advanced speakers. For some refugees who were professionals in their home country, they will require a high score in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to register with the relevant professional body.<sup>130</sup> We were told that not only can IELTS classes be hard to find, there is also a lack of financial support for the preparation classes and the exam itself.<sup>131</sup> Karen from the BRILL programme in Bristol told us that there are no free IELTS classes in Bristol, and that the time needed to study – both at home and in the library – is very high. During the visit to Bristol, Amina, who is a nurse by background, told us that a very high score is needed to be able to access a medical course.

118. In September 2016, the Home Office announced an additional £10million funding for English language tuition specifically for Syrian refugees who have arrived through the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. The Home Office said the funding would allow all adult refugees arriving through the scheme to receive 12 hours of language tuition each week for six months.<sup>132</sup> Stephen Hale from Refugee Action raised concerns about this funding being targeting only on resettled Syrian refugees, rather than also including refugees arriving through other routes:

*“in practice it’s often extremely difficult for a local authority and indeed undesirable for a local authority to isolate one group of people and say ‘we need to teach you English’. You can’t literally have someone on the classroom door saying ‘You’re Syrian, but how did you get here?’”<sup>133</sup>*

119. During an oral evidence session of the Home Affairs Select Committee, David Burrowes MP, a member of the APPG inquiry panel, questioned Robert Goodwill MP, the Immigration Minister, about why the additional funding was only targeted at resettled Syrian refugees rather than supporting learning for all refugees.<sup>134</sup> In a note sent to the Committee in response, the Minister said:

*“This is a specific programme for the resettlement of Syrians. Other adults who are granted refugee status or humanitarian protection become eligible for government skills funding as any other UK resident and have access to integration loans to help pay for education and training for work as well as accommodation and household items. Any learning from the experience of the VPRS or the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) would be considered to inform our approach to the integration for refugees who arrive in the UK by other means (e.g. a grant of asylum).”<sup>135</sup>*

**120. Finding: A lack of English language proficiency prevents refugees from being able to engage with services, increases isolation and is a significant barrier to integration. Given the important role English language skills play in successful integration,**

**we are concerned at the evidence we received showing the shortage of suitable English language classes. While the recent additional funding announced to provide teaching for resettled Syrian refugees is a welcome acknowledgement of the importance of ESOL classes, similar support is needed for all other refugees. Furthermore, singling out one group of refugees for extra support in this way can create problems on the ground.**

**121. Recommendations: We recommend that the Government create a strategy for ESOL provision in England, building on the good work already being done as part of the support provided to resettled Syrian refugees, such as appointing regional coordinators and exploring innovative ways of providing classes. To achieve this, the Government will need to increase the level of funding for ESOL classes. The strategy should also include support for voluntary groups providing conversation classes as additional language support alongside ESOL classes. This support may not necessarily be financial, but could include training and advice to ensure such provision is of a good standard.**

## Employment, training and higher education

122. The refugees we spoke to in Bristol and in Nottingham, as well as those who gave evidence during the sessions in parliament, spoke of their desire to secure a job and be able to support themselves financially. However, no matter how refugees arrive in the UK – whether through resettlement, after claiming asylum, or through refugee family reunion – the evidence we received showed that there are many barriers to being able to access the job market. Stephen Hale from Refugee Action set out some of these barriers, as well as how they might be overcome:

*“it is certainly the case that levels of unemployment are high among both people who came through the asylum route and people who came through resettlement. It’s also the case that they have particular obstacles in accessing the job market, and that those obstacles could very substantially be addressed. They don’t understand that market, they don’t*

*understand how to put together a CV. There are ways for us, collectively, to address that, through mentoring, through group sessions in understanding what is the job market in the UK and how it works, in getting people into placements so they can get experience in the workplace, and they'll obviously use that in future interviews.*"<sup>136</sup>

123. As noted in the previous chapter, asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work while awaiting a decision on their application, and so, along with resettled refugees, they will not have experience of working in the UK.<sup>137</sup> During the inquiry, we were told that the particular barriers vary greatly between individuals, depending on factors such as English language proficiency, previous professions, educational background and childcare responsibilities. Some refugees will have been professionals in their home country, others will have missed out on many years of formal education.

## Qualifications

124. Wrexham Council set out one of the obstacles refugees can face. They told us of a Syrian father who was living in Wrexham. Although he had engineering qualifications from Syria, they were not recognised in the UK and so he was struggling to find employment.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Bristol Refugee Forum explained that for refugees with qualifications that are not recognised in the UK, the process of re-qualifying can be "long, expensive and demoralising".<sup>139</sup> During our visit to Bristol, a number of refugees, including Amina and Mohammed who were both medical professionals, told us of their frustration at not having their previous qualifications recognised in the UK.

125. During the inquiry, we learnt of a number of schemes that are targeted at helping refugees complete the training and courses they need to in order to utilise their existing qualifications. Some of those schemes were aimed at refugees who had been healthcare professionals before they came to the UK. Given the shortage of healthcare professionals in the NHS, these schemes are of obvious value to the UK – it is far cheaper to retrain a refugee doctor than to put an individual through the entire qualification process to become a doctor. Box 2 provides details of one such scheme, Building Bridges.

### Box 2: Building Bridges – helping refugees work in the NHS

The Refugee Council told us about a project they run, Building Bridges, which is focused on refugees who were previously health professionals. The project helps refugees gain the necessary qualifications and clinical experience to practice in the UK.<sup>140</sup> The project is funded by the NHS through Health Education England. In 2016, the project supported over 60 refugees to find employment in the NHS, including as doctors, dentists, care workers and phlebotomists.<sup>141</sup> Through the project, refugees are helped with English language skills and knowledge of UK medical procedures to allow them to take the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board test, which enables people to practise medicine in the UK.<sup>142</sup>

## Help with the job market

126. The Bristol Refugee Forum told us that refugees may also be unfamiliar with the UK job market and so jobs are searched for in an ad hoc way.<sup>143</sup> Additionally, given the lack of financial resources, refugees may struggle to purchase clothing suitable for interview.<sup>144</sup> As a result, we were told that refugees find it difficult to find employment and those that do are often employed in low-skilled jobs that may not reflect their professional backgrounds.

127. Stephen Hale from Refugee Action told us that currently there is no way to know what the employment rate is among refugees as the data aren't collected.<sup>145</sup> The last time the Government collected the data, 34% of refugees said they were in employment 8 months after receiving their status, and 49% were employed after 21 months.<sup>146</sup> The University of Sussex found that employment prospects for resettled refugees differ greatly depending on the educational background of the individual. After six years in the UK, for resettled refugees with a university education, the employment rate was over 40%, compared to less than 5% of refugees who had no formal education before coming to the UK.<sup>147</sup>

128. We heard of many positive programmes that support refugees into work, often through community support. The Syrian father in Wrexham who we discussed early was referred, through the Wrexham Refugee and Asylum Seeker Multi-Agency Group, to a third sector organisation

who sponsored him to complete a training course that would allow him to get an engineering qualification. Wrexham Council told us that as a result of this, the father is now working full time in the engineering field.<sup>148</sup>

129. The difficulties refugees face finding employment means that many refugees have to rely on social security for longer than they would want to.<sup>149</sup> This not only has a cost in terms of preventing refugees from integrating further, but also has a cost to the taxpayer. The lack of data on employment rates of refugees means it is not possible to quantify what this cost is. However, the likelihood is that providing support to refugee to help them navigate the job market will save money in the future through decreased social security payments.

**130. Finding: Refugees want to be able to find a job – many have qualifications and experience from their home country that they want to put to use in the UK. However, there are many barriers, including a lack of familiarity with the UK job market, that prevent refugees from finding employment. When refugees are provided with support and advice, they are more likely to be able to secure employment. The Syrian Resettlement Programme requires local authorities to support refugees in accessing the labour market, and there are examples of local authorities providing excellent support. The cost of supporting refugees to enter the job market is likely to result in financial savings later on as they are less likely to need to rely on social security.**

**131. Recommendation: Central Government should work with local authorities to ensure that more refugees, including those who have been recognised as refugees after applying for asylum in the UK, are able to access support to find employment. Jobcentre staff should be aware of the support refugees may need in accessing the job market and be able to refer individuals to those organisations who are able to support them.**

## Higher Education

132. The ability for refugees to access university education was also raised throughout the inquiry. Student Action for Refugees (STAR) told us that people with refugee status throughout the UK have the same access to university as British students.<sup>150</sup> Being recognised as a refugee allows individuals to be eligible to pay 'home fees' and they are

immediately able to access a student loan to cover their living costs. In their written evidence STAR said that:

*“University helps refugees to integrate into UK life by providing a safe, empowering environment where refugees can make friends, learn new skills and rebuild their lives; all of which enable positive integration into British society. University also provides stability which can mitigate the negative effects of traumatic experiences. Envisioning a pathway to university is an incentive for young refugees and asylum seekers to remain in secondary and further education. Research has shown that, despite overcoming unimaginable difficulties many young refugees and asylum seekers are highly resilient and demonstrate a strong commitment to continuing on to higher education.”<sup>151</sup>*

133. A number of universities also offer scholarships and bursaries to help refugees access university. For example, SOAS University of London offers scholarships to four undergraduates, two Master's students, and one research student.<sup>152</sup> Balliol College, Oxford, has launched the Balliol Students' Scholarship, which aims to support a refugee student to study for an undergraduate degree commencing in October 2017.<sup>153</sup> The London School of Economics offers a range of postgraduate and undergraduate scholarships for asylum seekers and refugees.<sup>154</sup>

134. STAR told us that individuals granted humanitarian protection, rather than refugee status are unable to immediately access student finance to cover their living costs for university. This includes Syrian refugees being resettled through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. In their report on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Public Accounts Committee said that “those granted humanitarian protection status have to have been resident in the UK for three years in order to qualify for a similar level of support [as those with refugee status], meaning many miss out on a university education.”<sup>155</sup>

135. During the Committee stage of the Higher Education and Research Bill, which at the time of writing is before the House of Lords, Lord Dubs, a member of the inquiry panel, tabled an amendment aimed at addressing, among other things, the disparity between access to student finance for those with humanitarian protection as



compared to those with refugee status.<sup>156</sup> During the debate, the Bishop of Durham, also a member of this inquiry panel, said that the disparity existed despite those with humanitarian protection “having been found to be at real risk of suffering if they were to return to their country of origin. This includes risk of the death penalty, unlawful killing and torture.”<sup>157</sup>

136. In reply to the amendment, Viscount Younger of Leckie, Government Spokesperson for the Department for Education in the House of Lords, said that, speaking about Syrians resettled in the UK, “persons on the programme are not precluded from applying for refugee status if they consider they meet the criteria,”<sup>158</sup> suggesting that those resettled Syrians who would want to access student finance should apply for asylum.

137. When a similar amendment was tabled during the Report stage of the bill, Lord Young of Cookham, responding for the Government, said that the Government “are not persuaded of the need to treat persons given humanitarian protection more favourably than UK nationals for the purpose of student support.”<sup>159</sup> However, he added:

*“The Government understand the importance of accessing higher education as soon as possible for those on the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme and the vulnerable children’s resettlement scheme and are looking very carefully at this issue.”<sup>160</sup>*

**138. Findings: For those refugees for whom going to university is a suitable option for which they have the aptitude, studying at university can be an excellent way for refugees to integrate and rebuild their lives in the UK. The growing number of scholarship schemes and bursaries targeted at refugees is very welcome, but we are concerned by the legislative barrier that for those with humanitarian protection – which includes resettled Syrian refugees – prevents access to student finance.**

**139. Recommendation: We recommend that individuals with humanitarian protection, including but not limited to resettled Syrian refugees, should be able to access student support immediately upon being given their status, in the same way that those granted refugee status are.**

## Healthcare

140. All refugees in the UK have immediate free access and entitlement to NHS services. Doctors of the World noted the positive impact this can have for successful integration, as it enables refugees to “access healthcare, address their health needs and go on to rebuild their lives and integrate.” They added:

*“Those who suffer poor health are less able to engage in activities that foster integration: to work, to study, to volunteer, to socialise, to attend community and religious groups, to play sport and to participate in social activities.”<sup>161</sup>*

141. Being able to access healthcare is important to everyone, no matter their background. Throughout our inquiry, including during the visits to Nottingham and Bristol, access to healthcare was a key concern for refugees. Refugees and those supporting them told us that refugees often require physical and mental health treatments, often related to the reason for why they are a refugee. Still Human Still Here noted that in one survey, 12% of refugees described their health as bad or very bad, compared to 7% for the population of England as a whole.<sup>162</sup>

142. However, despite being legally entitled to healthcare, some organisations raised concerns regarding the ability of refugees to access the health services they needed. Both Doctors of the World and Mike Kaye from Still Human Still Here said that they are aware of refugees being blocked from registering at a GP’s surgery or charged for secondary healthcare due to confusion around entitlement.<sup>163</sup> Doctors of the World told us of a 54 year-old man from Uganda who had been granted indefinite leave to remain 13 years ago. He was refused palliative care for oesophageal cancer by an NHS trust after they wrongly classified him as being ineligible for free NHS care.<sup>164</sup> Doctors of the World referred his case to a lawyer, and following legal action care was provided, albeit after an unnecessary delay.

143. We were told that one of the reasons why refugees can struggle to register for a GP is that GP practices can require patients to provide their passport and a proof of address.<sup>165</sup> As discussed in the last chapter, there are many reasons why refugees may not be able to provide these documents. During the visit to Bristol, we were told that refugees often end up registering at ‘The Haven’, a

specialist primary healthcare service for asylum seekers and refugees due to the barriers to registration at other practices. Jonathan, a refugee from the Survivors Speak Out network, told us that after he got his refugee status he struggled to access healthcare. This was because he was living with a family who had volunteered to give him accommodation while he was waiting for a decision on his asylum application, and so had no way to prove his address.<sup>166</sup>

144. As part of the inquiry, we wrote to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across the UK to ask them about their experiences of providing healthcare services to refugees, and how they take the needs of refugees into considerations when commissioning services. In their response, the West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group said that they had identified that some refugees had difficulties registering with specific practices. They told us that they had addressed this by running training sessions jointly between the CCG and the British Red Cross, and they had resolved the issues at those practices. The CCG informed us that as the training has been well received, it has now been rolled out to other practices.<sup>167</sup> Box 3 provides details of a similar scheme that the panel were told about during the visit to Nottingham.

### Box 3: Into the Mainstream – an example of best practice from Nottingham

In Nottingham, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum run a project called 'Into the Mainstream', which seeks to support refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants to access NHS health services. Part of the work of the project involves workshops for health professionals to ensure they are aware of the eligibility of refugees and asylum seekers for healthcare services and the barriers they may face.

During the panel's visit to Nottingham, we were told of the excellent level of GP registration amongst both refugees who had arrived through the Syrian resettlement programme and those who had come through the asylum route. 95% of respondents to a survey carried out by Nottingham Citizens said they were registered with a GP, which was said to be a testament to the success of Into the Mainstream.

145. Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group set out some of the barriers to healthcare services that they identified as being specific to refugee groups. They told us:

*"Refugees may well have fewer available resources within the UK in terms of support from their own communities and financial resources, and this will impact on their health and wellbeing. Factors such as isolation, loss of family; and access to housing, education and health services will make life very difficult. Refugees may have made very difficult and long journeys where they have been unprotected from crime. Many refugees may be suffering from specific conditions such as malnutrition and post-traumatic stress syndrome."<sup>168</sup>*

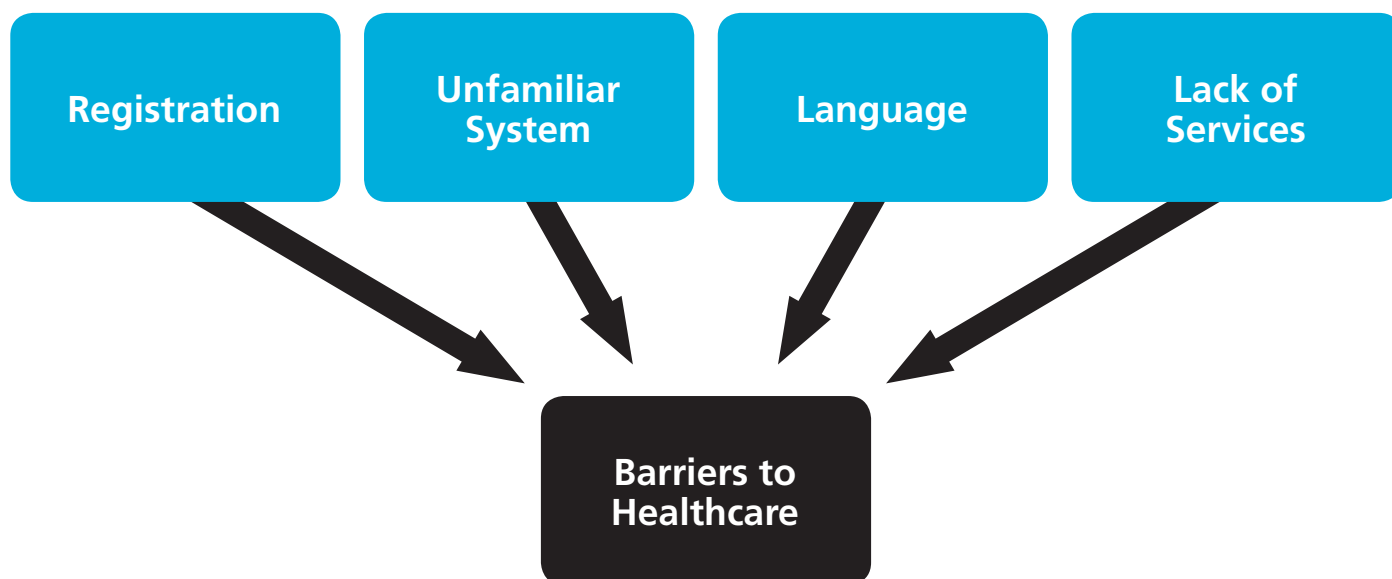
146. A number of CCGs told us that one of the main barriers to refugees accessing healthcare services was a lack of understanding of the services available and of how the NHS operates.<sup>169</sup> This included a lack of information available in languages other than English. Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group said that although "Public Health England has produced one leaflet to date [in Arabic], the resettlement programme would benefit from all centrally issued information being available in a range of languages."<sup>170</sup>

147. The Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group also said that language barriers meant there was a reliance on interpreter and translation services, and raised the significant cost attached to providing such services.<sup>171</sup> Reducing these costs would, therefore, be one effect of increasing and improving the provision of ESOL classes for refugees, as we recommended above.

## Mental health

148. During the inquiry's visit to Bristol, Judy Ryde from Trauma Foundation South West told us that, although it seems counterintuitive, people often become more depressed after they are told about the decision to grant them refugee status. She told us that after receiving the decision, newly recognised refugees are hit by the reality that their future is in the UK and that they have "lost" their home country. Ms Ryde told us that symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder become worse, and that depression, anxiety and self harm are also common.

Diagram 2: Barriers to Healthcare for refugees



149. The Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group also told us that mental health conditions may not be apparent when refugees first arrive in the UK. They said:

*“Many refugees do develop mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, and these needs often present or are shared 12-24 months after arriving. The Vulnerable Person’s Relocation scheme provides funding for the first 12 months only for current health needs, which does not enable robust planning to meet emerging needs.”<sup>172</sup>*

The CCG added that refugees and asylum seekers often have specific needs around their mental health, as many will have “experienced civil war, torture, violence, sexual violence, and may be experiencing the early symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.”<sup>173</sup>

150. We heard evidence from Doctors of the World that refugees have an increased susceptibility to mental health conditions, and that 25% of people who attend their clinics report their psychological health as “bad or very bad.”<sup>174</sup> They added that poor mental health can be a result of forced migration or “socio-political” conditions in the UK. Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group, in their letter to the inquiry, identified that refugees may have mental health conditions “which might ideally require referral to a psychotherapist”.

However, they told us that those services weren’t currently available in Tameside and Glossop, and that “current pressures on mental health services mean that there may be delays in accessing these”.<sup>175</sup>

151. Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group told us that they had been working to ensure that Syrian refugees resettled to the area under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme were able to successfully register with a GP on arrival and promptly receive the healthcare they may require. They added that:

*“As commissioners, we recognised the importance of effective mental health services within Newcastle and Gateshead, and assure parity of esteem for mental and physical health. As such, we have commissioned specific mental health services tailored to meet the needs of refugees settling within the area.”<sup>176</sup>*

152. Roger Nyantou is the Director of the Refugee Education Training and Advice service in Leeds, as well as a refugee from Cameroon. He told us that refugees don’t easily recognise they have a mental health condition. Mr Nyantou stressed the priority that needs to be given to addressing mental health needs, saying “You cannot sit down with someone who’s struggling with mental health to talk to them about CVs, or someone who is homeless. You have to solve the pressing needs before they can

move on.”<sup>177</sup> Other agencies told us that some refugees come from cultures where there is stigma attached to mental health, and so people are reluctant to seek support.

153. Some refugees, particularly survivors of torture, will require specialist services. For example, the Public Accounts Committee reported that more than half of the Syrian refugees resettled through the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme by June 2016 were survivors of torture or violence.<sup>178</sup> Despite the high number of refugees who were survivors of torture or violence, the Public Accounts Committee raised concerns that only a handful had been referred to the specialist agency Freedom from Torture. The Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group told us that one of the gaps they have identified was that refugees coming to the UK as a survivor of torture are not automatically being guaranteed a mental health check-up.<sup>179</sup>

### Partnerships

154. Some of the positive examples we were told about, including the work done between the Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and the British Red Cross to remove barriers to refugees being able to register at GP surgeries, resulted from CCGs working closely with local refugee organisations. For example, the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group said that they have a dedicated manager responsible for working with partner agencies and liaising with Refugee Community Organisations, as well as being represented at the Regional Refugee Forum.<sup>180</sup> Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group run a migrant health meeting with representation from providers and voluntary groups. The CCG told us that they have commissioned a service with Refugee Rights as part of their mental health service.<sup>181</sup>

**155. Findings: The health needs of refugees who arrive in the UK can be varied, both mentally and physically. Access to healthcare services is a vital component of successful integration and it is welcome that legislation allows refugees to access NHS services free of charge. However, the evidence we received showed that refugees can face difficulties registering for health services and may not be able to access information regarding how the NHS operates in a language they can understand. The evidence we received shows that where Clinical Commissioning Groups are actively engaging with local organisations and partners, the barriers refugees face can be**

**reduced and refugees are more likely to be provided with tailored services they require.**

**156. Recommendations: The Department of Health should work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure that all healthcare professionals are aware of the entitlements refugees have to NHS treatment and the forms of documentation refugees are likely to be able to provide. Clinical Commissioning Groups should review the availability of mental and physical health services available to refugees within their area, and incorporate the findings of those reviews into future commissioning decisions. The Department of Health should provide a forum for Clinical Commissioning Groups to share their best practice and positive experiences of providing services to refugees. Where the Home Office has identified refugees as having a particular health need, whether that was through a health assessment or through an asylum claim, the local authority and commissioning group should be informed.**

### Women refugees

157. Nina Murray from Scottish Refugee Council told us that women refugees face particular gendered barriers and that systems for refugees and asylum seekers contribute to these. She highlighted the way that NINOs are allocated, explaining that NINOs are only automatically allocated to the ‘head of household’, which is the principal applicant on an asylum claim.<sup>182</sup> An asylum application is made by the principal applicant, and any dependants – who may either be a spouse, civil partner, married partner, or minor child – who have accompanied the principal applicant to the UK are included in the principal applicant’s claim.<sup>183</sup> According to the Home Office’s quarterly immigration statistics, women are more likely to be dependants on a claim than men.<sup>184</sup> Anyone on an asylum application as a dependant is, therefore, not automatically allocated a NINO. This creates a financial dependency on the part of the woman. Ms Murray added that it can be very difficult for women to get a NINO without support from an advocate.<sup>185</sup>

158. A further barrier is that there are longer delays in processing benefits more often claimed by women. Scottish Refugee Council said that, as an example, “the average number of days from status to first payment of Job Seekers Allowance in 2015-16 was 40 days, whilst Child Benefit was over 90 days and Child Tax Credit nearly

120 days.”<sup>186</sup> They further explained that half of women accessing their services had no prior formal work experience. However, welfare benefit and employment services did not offer tailored support to address those particular barriers.<sup>187</sup>

159. Nina Murray also raised concerns about the lack of emergency homelessness accommodation for women and the impact this can have on newly recognised refugee women who find themselves homeless. She said:

*“where there isn’t temporary accommodation available, when somebody presents as homeless, we’ve seen cases of men and women being told to go and stay with friends. Women have told us of the danger, of the risk, of being told to go and stay with friends. If you don’t have any friends, what are the options? There’s a real risk of exploitation and violence against women for women who, by definition, have experienced much more violence and abuse than the general population.”<sup>188</sup>*

160. During the panel’s visit to Bristol, we were told by Nathalie Jaffar, herself a refugee, that women are at risk of gender based violence and sexual violence even after they’ve been granted refugee status in the UK. She said that services often don’t have staff with the specialist skills to work with women who have experienced sexual or gender based violence. Nathalie added that women have a “lack of understanding regarding the system”, and that is true of women who may have been in the UK for several years.

161. In addition to the trauma refugee women may have faced in their countries of origin, Women for Refugee Women told us about the emotional impact leaving their home can have:

*“Alongside this trauma, and although they had to leave their countries to ensure their safety, women also described the emotional wrench of having to leave behind everything they knew, and people they loved. One woman told us that when she had to flee her country, ‘my heart was broken’. Some women also talked about when they first arrived in the UK, and explained*

*that because they didn’t know anyone, they felt isolated and depressed.”<sup>189</sup>*

162. During the inquiry, we also received evidence that women face additional barriers to accessing services, such as ESOL classes. Refugee Action explained that women had reported being unable to attend ESOL classes due to childcaring responsibilities. They told us that a lack of childcare facilities and long travel times were some of the barriers to participation women faced.<sup>190</sup>

**163. Findings: Many refugee women have experienced sexual and gender based violence either in their home country or during their journey to safety. The evidence we received also shows that refugee women are at risk of sexual and gender based violence once they arrive in the UK. Being financially dependent on a partner, as well as facing barriers to services such as English language classes, can make refugee women vulnerable to exploitation.**

**164. Recommendations: When NINo applications are made as part of an asylum application, they should be made by all applicants who would be eligible for a NINo, not just the principle applicant. The Department for Education should work with ESOL providers to ensure women with child caring responsibilities are able to access classes, including through the provision of adequate child care.**

## Child refugees

165. Children in refugee families will be affected by all of the issues raised in this and the previous chapter. If a parent is struggling to find accommodation and a means of financial support, this has an obvious negative impact on the wellbeing of their children. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) also told us that refugee children face particular challenges both as a result of the reasons why they have become a refugee and also the unfamiliar educational setting they find themselves in.<sup>191</sup>

166. The Coram Children’s Legal Centre and Centrepoint both told us that unaccompanied children face additional barriers to integrating. Pip Johnson from Centrepoint told us that many children, particularly those in Kent, are unable to access English language classes as there is no provision nearby. Without this support, we were told that

young refugees are then unable to access college and continue their education.<sup>192</sup>

167. The NUT explained that “because the UK places refugee children in mainstream schools immediately, they have a frontline role in supporting such pupils.”<sup>193</sup> They added that due to the proportion of time young refugees will spend in an educational environment, schools and colleges play a pivotal role in providing a welcoming environment. In their written evidence, the NUT also told us about the work done by schools to create opportunities “to work together on projects which challenge prejudice and racism, and educate pupils about the issue through practical activities.”<sup>194</sup>

### Leicester Schools Welcome Refugees<sup>195</sup>

Ruth Sinhal set up ‘Leicester Schools Welcome Refugees’ to encourage all schools in Leicester to collect food and toiletries to be distributed by the Red Cross in ‘welcome packs’ to asylum seekers and refugees in the city. She promoted it through local newspapers, emailed individual schools, contacted Leicester NUT, local MPs and other agencies. Now 31 schools are involved, supporting the initiative by collecting items, fundraising events, creating Welcome Cards and books, and via links with De Montfort University and ‘Leicester City of Sanctuary.’

168. The NUT told us that some schools face difficulties supporting refugee children. In their written evidence they said:

*“Trauma and distress affect many refugees. With the funding cuts making child and adolescent mental health services waiting times even longer, schools are increasingly having to find ways to support vulnerable children who urgently need professional mental health interventions.”<sup>196</sup>*

169. They added there is a lack of centralised focus on how best to support refugee children in schools, including a lack sharing of best practice and training material. The NUT told us about a failure to share how the support provided to teachers and refugee children can vary across the country:

*“services for refugee children are patchy, vulnerable to local funding decisions, lacking in central direction and not connected to the latest evidence-informed practice. A number of reports have noted the ad-hoc, ineffectual nature of training by Local Authorities and NGOs to school staff on issues facing refugee children and the lack of additional staff to provide catch-up language lessons in smaller groups. Policies to support refugee children tend to be seen as the responsibility of those working in English language support, rather than all staff.”<sup>197</sup>*

170. The NUT told us about a hub for refugee teaching resources, booklists and useful websites that they have developed for use by teachers.<sup>198</sup> They have also produced guidance to help teachers welcome refugee children, including through making their classroom accessible and providing an induction.

### Immigration leave for unaccompanied children

171. Stuart MacLachlan from the Coram Children’s Legal Centre explained that the type of leave often granted to unaccompanied children does not offer a long-term solution.<sup>199</sup> We were told that around half of unaccompanied children have their asylum claim refused and are granted limited leave to remain as an unaccompanied minor. This leave lasts until the child turns 17.5 or for 2.5 years after the leave was granted, which ever is shorter. The Coram Children’s Legal Centre told us:

*“It is important that children who are granted [limited] leave appeal against the decision not to grant them refugee status or humanitarian protection when they receive their asylum refusal. However, in practice this often does not happen, either due to lack of quality advice or availability of representation. A grant of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children leave is not a long-term solution for children and will place barriers to the child being able to integrate in the UK, including in education, employment and travel.”<sup>200</sup>*

**172. Findings: Refugee children face some specific barriers to their integration in the UK. School environments need to be able to accommodate refugee children, and the NUT have produced welcome resources to support teachers and schools. Additionally, unaccompanied children who are given temporary leave do not have a durable, long-term solution and face an insecure future.**

**173. Recommendations: The Department for Education should ensure schools are supported in providing support for refugee children, including through the dissemination of best practice. The leave given to unaccompanied children should provide durable solutions and a secure future.**

## Family reunion

174. Refugees will often have become separated from family members during their journey to the UK. Refugee family reunion was raised as an issue throughout the inquiry. In the evidence we received, we were told of the impact that problems with family reunion can have on those who are in the UK and have been granted refugee status. During the visit to Bristol, we were told that these problems include delays in completing the family reunion process, as well as the limits on who qualifies as a family member under the rules.<sup>201</sup>

### Refugee Family Reunion

In the UK, adults granted refugee status or humanitarian protection are able to apply for family reunion.<sup>202</sup> This allows the person in the UK to sponsor a close relative who they have been separated from to come and join them. Under the immigration rules, a close relative is a spouse/partner, and dependent children under the age of 18, as long as that relationship existed prior to the refugee leaving their home country. There is also discretion for family reunion to be allowed in some other circumstances, including, but not limited to, cases where children over the age of 18 are dependent on their parent who is in the UK.

175. Chloe Morgan from the Refugee Council told us:

*"I'd just like to mention the psychological impact that I've witnessed on refugees who I've worked with of being separated from their family members and being afraid for the welfare of their children and family members. I've worked with refugees who have been signed off sick from work by their GP because of the psychological impact of being separated from family. I've supported a woman who was found to be in priority need for accommodation by Newham Council because of the depression which was explained by her psychotherapist to be because of being separated from her children. So you can see how this affects your ability to integrate to life in the UK."<sup>203</sup>*

176. Similarly, the British Red Cross, who assist refugees in the UK to be reunited with their family members, said:

*"we meet parents worried sick about their children who have been left behind in the very places from which they have been protected. A Syrian mother explained how being separated from her children felt at a recent parliamentary event. Her daughters, all in their early twenties, have been unable to join her, her husband and two younger sons because they are over 18. They are therefore still living in Syria. She fears her daughters may be at risk of being raped, trafficked, or killed 'at any moment'. Her husband also noted: 'If we're reunited with our girls, I would do anything for this country. We would be so grateful.'<sup>204</sup>*

177. Understandably, for refugees who have been separated from their loved ones, concerns over safety of family members are often at the forefront of their minds. As the Bristol Refugee Forum put it, "For many new refugees, family reunion is the over-riding priority."<sup>205</sup> They told us that successfully being reunited with family members can be a considerable boost to longer term integration, but that barriers to family reunion can become a barrier to integration. Nina Murray from Scottish Refugee Council told us that refugees who use their services ask "how can we begin to rebuild our lives when we're worried about our family members?"<sup>206</sup>

### Legal Aid

178. One of the barriers we were told about was the lack of legal aid for family reunion applications. Prior to the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (commonly referred to as LASPO) coming into force in 2013, legal aid was available for refugee family reunion applications. LASPO provides legal aid for most aspects of asylum and refugee law. However, under LASPO refugee family reunion applications are treated as an immigration matter, and therefore considered to be straightforward.<sup>207</sup> The Government have committed to reviewing the impact of parts 1 and 2 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2016 by April 2018.<sup>208</sup>

179. The British Red Cross told us that refugee family reunion applications are far from straightforward. During our visit to Bristol, a representative of the British Red Cross highlighted that in at least one other area of government policy, family reunion is treated as a complicated legal area. In the UK, it is a criminal offence for a person to provide immigration advice unless their organisation is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).<sup>209</sup> Under the OISC framework, there are three levels of advisor:

**Level 1:** basic immigration advice within the Immigration Rules

**Level 2:** more complex casework, including applications outside the Immigration Rules

**Level 3:** appeals<sup>210</sup>

Under the OISC rules, level 1 advisers are specifically not allowed to work on family reunion cases. Only level 2 and level 3 advisers are deemed to have the right level of skill to undertake family reunion work.<sup>211</sup>

180. The British Red Cross run a service providing legal advice for family reunion applications, although Karl Pike, the Refugees and Asylum Policy Manager at the British Red Cross, indicated that it was not big enough to meet the need. 95 per cent of the people who use that service say that they think it would be very difficult to make an application without legal support.<sup>212</sup> The difficulties include ensuring the evidence required to prove the family relationship is submitted, particularly as documentation such as birth certificates or marriage certificates are often lost when families leave their homes. The British Red Cross told us that in their 2014 study 'Not so Straightforward', a third of cases "relied on witness statements and statutory

declarations produced by legal advisors and a quarter featured an interview or documentation discrepancy."<sup>213</sup> We were told that for legal advice on family reunion applications, refugees would need to pay around £600-£800.<sup>214</sup>

181. The consequences of not providing the correct evidence were highlighted in a report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Border and Immigration, David Bolt, published in September 2016.<sup>215</sup> The Chief Inspector concluded that the Home Office "was too ready to refuse applications where it judged that the applicant had failed to provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the eligibility criteria, when deferring a decision to allow the applicant to produce the 'missing' evidence might be the fairer and more efficient option."<sup>216</sup>

182. In particular, the Chief Inspector focused on DNA evidence. He highlighted that in 2014 the Home Office stopped providing funding for DNA testing, instead placing the onus on applicants for family reunion to provide the evidence. As many applicants for family reunion will be on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits, they are unlikely to be able to afford DNA tests. Mr Bolt concluded that the result of removing funding for DNA testing was to delay the reunion of families who are entitled under the UK legislation. He said that the removal of testing has led, at least in part, to the doubling of refusal rates for family reunion applications made by Somali and Eritrean nationals.

183. In their response to the report, the Home Office said: "The policy regarding DNA evidence is being reviewed by the Home Office, and the outcome of the review should be known by the end of the year. Part of the review is the consideration of allowing applications to be deferred to allow DNA evidence to be submitted, and if the Home Office should commission such testing."<sup>217</sup> At the time of writing, the outcome of this review is unknown.

### Limited definition of family

184. Under the Immigration Rules, refugees in the UK can sponsor their spouse, partner and dependent children to join them. In March 2016, UNHCR released a briefing paper on family reunion in the UK. In it they said:



*“It should be a priority for States to ensure that those who remain behind in countries of asylum or countries of origin can join family members who are residing as beneficiaries of international protection. The concept of the family should be interpreted flexibly, which could reflect strong and continuous social, emotional or economic dependency between family members, though which does not require complete dependence (for example, as in the case of spouses or elderly parents).”<sup>218</sup>*

185. In July 2016, the Home Office published updated guidance on refugee family reunion applications. The British Red Cross told us that the guidance:

*“now explicitly refers to children aged 18 years and over. It says that children aged 18 and over who are left in danger and are not leading independent lives qualify for exceptional and compassionate circumstance in which visas should be granted outside the rules.”<sup>219</sup>*

However, they added that:

*“We remain of the view that, while a change in guidance is very welcome, a change in the rules would provide more certainty for refugee families. Without such a change, these life-changing decisions will ultimately be left at the discretion of Home Office staff. The Red Cross wants to guarantee young people are not faced with the prospect of being left alone in some of the world’s most dangerous places.”<sup>220</sup>*

186. ILPA told us that the lack of provisions in the Immigration Rules for extended family members leads to prolonged periods of separation for families. They said that widening the rules would be beneficial for the integration not only of the refugee already present in the UK, but also for any family members who might otherwise be forced to make a dangerous journey to reach the UK.<sup>221</sup>

## Unaccompanied child refugees

187. In their written evidence, both ILPA and Coram Children’s Legal Centre raised the lack of family reunion rights for unaccompanied child refugees. Coram Children’s Legal Centre told us “not allowing children to reunite with their parents, grandparents or siblings will continue the trauma and suffering of separation and loss.” They added:

*“Delays in reunification of families can have a devastating impact; exposing the child or young person to trauma and mental health issues, and affecting their integration in the UK. It can further expose family members overseas to threats and debt bondage, and put them at risk of making the same dangerous journey the child had to make.”<sup>222</sup>*

188. In their written evidence to the inquiry, ILPA argued that the Home Office’s position on family reunion rights for child refugees is “based on a misunderstanding.”<sup>223</sup> They say that refugee children are not recognised as refugees because they are children, but because they are “at risk of persecution by reason of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group in the country of origin.”<sup>224</sup> Coram Children’s Legal Centre told us that it is “extremely unfair” that children are not afforded the same rights as adults who have gone through the same asylum process.<sup>225</sup>

## When families arrive

189. The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council raised a challenge family reunion can present for local authorities. When refugees are resettled to the UK local authorities know who is going to arrive in their area and when they will arrive. Although family reunion is a managed route (in that people arrive in the UK on a visa) local authorities are not informed that a family will be coming. This means they are unable to do the preparation for families who have arrived through the refugee family reunion route as they would for resettled families.

190. As discussed in the previous chapter, newly recognised refugees often struggle to access housing. Many refugees seeking to sponsor family members to join them will be single adults, and therefore there is a high possibility that they will be living in shared, temporary or

single bedroom accommodation. The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council told us that “There are currently several refugee family reunion cases who have presented as homeless or overcrowded and the Local Authority has to accommodate them under Homelessness legislation.”<sup>226</sup>

191. As well as meeting the housing needs of the reunited family, new social security applications are likely to be required. There is no support for refugees and their family members to make the necessary applications. Additionally, Chloe Morgan of the Refugee Council told us that family members who come to the UK under the discretionary part of the family reunion rules may not be able to access social security immediately due to the terms of their immigration status.<sup>227</sup>

**192. Finding: Being worried about family members is an understandable concern for newly recognised and newly arrived refugees. Successfully being reunited with family members is an important step in helping refugees to integrate. However, refugees often face barriers to exercising their right to family reunion, including through a lack of legal aid and difficulties providing supporting evidence.**

**193. Recommendation: We recommend that as part of the review into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the Government should look closely at the impact removing legal aid from refugee family reunion cases has had. We also recommend that the Home Office should work with applicants to ensure the necessary evidence is submitted when applying, and this should include the reinstatement of government funding for DNA testing where appropriate.**

**194. Finding: Although the guidance on family reunion issued last summer is welcomed, the definition of family in the Immigration Rules remains very restrictive. Additionally, the lack of family reunion rights for unaccompanied children is a barrier to their successful integration.**

**195. Recommendations: The Home Office should amend the Immigration Rules so that adult refugees in the UK are able to sponsor any dependent relative. The Immigration Rules should also be amended to allow unaccompanied child refugees to sponsor their parents and siblings.**

## Safe Return Reviews

196. On 9 March 2017, newspaper reports highlighted that new Home Office guidance had been published that included new sections on “safe return” reviews when refugees who had been granted refugee status or humanitarian protection subsequently made applications for settlement.<sup>228</sup> Refugee status and humanitarian protection come with five years’ limited leave and a five year route for settlement – i.e. after refugees have been in the UK for five years, they are able to apply for permanent settlement in the UK.<sup>229</sup>

197. The updated guidance on Refugee Leave issued on 9 March says that:

*“All those who apply for settlement protection after completing the appropriate probationary period of limited leave will be subject to a safe return review with reference to the country situation at the date the application is considered. Those who still need protection at that point will normally qualify for settlement.”<sup>230</sup>*

For refugees who apply for settlement after five years, the Home Office will carry out a review to see if the reasons they were awarded refugee status are still exist. If they don’t, then they will not qualify for settlement and “will need to apply to stay on another basis or leave the UK.”<sup>231</sup>

198. A number of concerns were raised about the impact safe return reviews would have on the prospects for refugees to successfully integrate. The UNHCR said they were concerned that the policy:

*“may have a serious impact on the wellbeing of refugees and their ability to settle and be in long-term employment. It will also put an additional strain on the government’s services and resources. We also feel that this is not needed, because under British and international law, there are already mechanisms in place to review refugee status.”<sup>232</sup>*

Colin Yeo, a barrister specialising in UK immigration law said:

*“The suggestion that a change of personal circumstances may disqualify a refugee from settlement may well end up having a disproportionate impact on women refugees. It may prove difficult to show that a risk of domestic violence or FGM remains five years after the original asylum claim, for example.”<sup>233</sup>*

**199. Finding:** We are concerned that the automatic use of safe return reviews at the end of the initial leave to stay in the UK for both those with refugee or humanitarian protection status will create significant uncertainty and risk for both the individuals and families affected but also for the public and third sectors and local communities supporting their integration. The prospect of these reviews will affect the ability of refugees to successfully integrate. The reviews will both undermine the UK from realising their full potential of refugees and the extent to which refugees feel protected and secure in the UK. Employers may be less willing to employ a refugee if their long term status in the UK is uncertain, UK causing needless mental anguish and exerting specific harm to children in terms of their education and stability, as well as practically impeding enjoyment of family reunion rights.

**200. Recommendation:** The Home Office should amend their policy guidance to remove safe return reviews for refugees applying for settlement.

## The Impact of the Asylum System

201. The inquiry focused on the experiences of refugees after they have refugee status in the UK. The operation of the asylum system and the experiences of asylum seekers was, therefore, not a central focus. However, the evidence we received shows that experiences of the asylum system can have a detrimental impact on future integration for those who are granted refugee status. A number of those who gave evidence to the inquiry told us that to understand the experience of refugees in the UK, the impact of the asylum system must be considered. For example, Women for Refugee Women told us:

*“To help ensure the inclusion of refugees, support cannot simply start at the point of granting refugee status; it must start much sooner, at the point of making the asylum claim.”<sup>234</sup>*

202. Women for Refugee Women also highlighted how the experience refugees have had prior to getting refugee status can prevent refugees from being able to successfully integrate:

*“The impact of the current asylum system on the integration and inclusion of refugees was highlighted by one woman we spoke to, who had recently received a positive decision on her claim. She explained that, having been through the difficulties of the asylum system, she didn’t feel ready to start sorting out things she was now expected to deal with, such as finding accommodation and securing employment. She asked: ‘Can’t they see that I’m still sore? I have wounds inside. I’ve been going through this for years.’”<sup>235</sup>*

In their written evidence, UNHCR gave four examples of how the asylum process can negatively impact on the integration outcomes of refugees who have been through the asylum route:

- Prevalent use of detention. UNHCR, together with other stakeholders, continues to call on the UK Government to implement a time limit for detention and to explore the use of alternatives.
- Restrictions on asylum-seekers’ right to work meaning that, as a general rule, they can only apply for permission to fill a shortage vacancy if they have been waiting for over twelve months for an initial decision on their asylum claim.
- Degree of uncertainty, in practical terms, around exemptions such as for health charges and the impact of Right to Rent as well as sometimes the appropriateness, availability and standard of housing or access to health provision, such as mental health services.
- Statelessness determination procedure does not provide applicants (and their dependants) with recourse to any form of accommodation or financial assistance.<sup>236</sup>

Other organisations also raised the impact of the restrictions on the right to work and of detention, while

others told us that the levels of financial support available to asylum seekers and problems with the decision making process also had a negative impact.

### Detention

203. In March 2015, the APPG on Refugees, in partnership with the APPG on Migration, published a report entitled "The Use of Immigration Detention in the UK".<sup>237</sup> That report made a number of recommendations for reform of the use of immigration detention in the UK, including:

- There should be a time limit of 28 days on the length of time anyone can be held in immigration detention;
- Detention is used disproportionately frequently, resulting in too many instances of detention. The presumption in theory and practice should be in favour of community-based resolutions and against detention;
- Decisions to detain should be very rare and detention should be for the shortest possible time and only to effect removal;
- The Government should learn from international best practice and introduce a much wider range of alternatives to detention than are currently used in the UK.

204. A number of organisations, including those we spoke to in Bristol, raised the impact that the use of detention has on individuals, as well as their family members and communities. We were told that it isn't just those who are detained who are affected. For example, in Bristol we were told that some asylum seekers who are required to attend regular reporting meetings with Home Office staff routinely take all of their belongings with them because they are worried they will be detained at the reporting centre.

205. Since the joint APPG report was published in 2015, Stephen Shaw has published a Government commissioned review into the welfare of vulnerable persons in immigration detention. In a written statement responding to Mr Shaw's review, the then Immigration Minister James Brokenshire made a number of commitments which he said the Government hoped would "lead to a reduction in the number of those detained, and the duration of detention before removal, in turn improving the welfare of those detained."<sup>238</sup> **The APPG on Refugees will continue to monitor the Government's reforms to the use of Immigration Detention, and welcome the**

**confirmation that Stephen Shaw will be asked to undertake a follow up review in late 2017.**<sup>239</sup>

### Restriction on the Right to Work

206. The impact of being unable to work while awaiting for a decision on their asylum claim was raised by several people who submitted evidence. Currently, asylum seekers are allowed to apply for permission to work if they have been waiting for more than twelve months for a decision on their application. If granted permission, they are only allowed to work in occupations on the Government's shortage occupation list. These occupations tend to be very specific requiring specialist knowledge and training, including chemical engineers, computer animators and "skilled classical ballet dancers".<sup>240</sup> As a result, organisations report that very few, if any, asylum seekers are ever able to work while awaiting an decision on their application.

207. Mike Kaye from Still Human Still Here told us that asylum seekers are "effectively prohibited from work, so they deskill and lose their self esteem, confidence, etc."<sup>241</sup> As discussed earlier, the gaps in employment and the lack of experience of the UK job market make it harder for newly recognised refugees to find a job after they are granted their status.

### Financial support

208. We were also told that the levels of asylum support, currently set at £36.95 per person per week, negatively impact on asylum seekers both during the asylum process and after they are granted status. For example, the written submission from the organisations based in Leeds said that being in receipt of asylum support "for many months and sometimes years can severely impact on physical health, mental health and someone's ability to do anything more than survive."<sup>242</sup>

### Decision making

209. A number of organisations who gave evidence to the inquiry told us that delays in the asylum process lead to delays in refugees receiving their status.<sup>243</sup> The evidence we received argued that the longer it takes for a refugee to be recognised, the higher the possibility that the system

will have a negative consequence on the ability for refugees to integrate successfully.

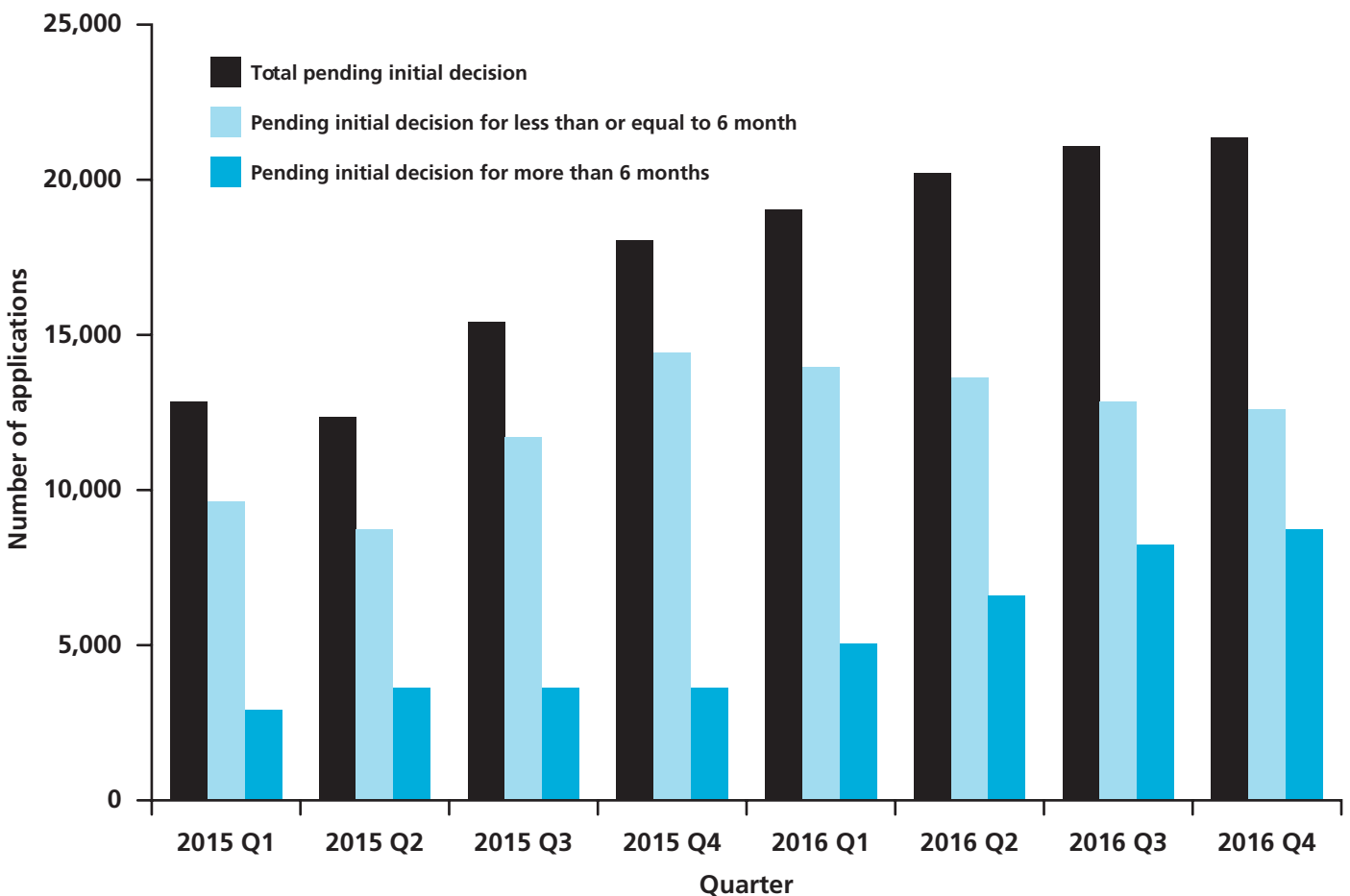
210. The Home Office aims to decide 98% straightforward asylum applications within six months, a target the current Immigration Minister Robert Goodwill has said has been met consistently since the end of 2014.<sup>244</sup> However, as Graph 1 shows, recently the number of asylum applications not receiving an initial decision within six months has been increasing: the number of asylum applications which had not received an initial decision within six months more than doubled between December 2015 and December 2016.<sup>245</sup>

211. ILPA told us that the number of applications awaiting an initial decision does not provide the full picture as it doesn't take into account the number of applicants awaiting a hearing on their appeal. In their written evidence

ILPA told us that the First-tier tribunal had recently advised that immigration and asylum appeals were currently being heard within 12 months, but that some cases were taking longer.<sup>246</sup> ILPA also highlighted the high success rate for appeals:

*"In 2015, over a third (35%) of appeals brought against Home Office decisions to refuse asylum were allowed by independent judges of the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber). More recent statistics highlight an even further deterioration in Home Office decision-making, with the proportion of appeals allowed by the Tribunal rising to 43% between January and March 2016 and to 46% between April and June 2016 – almost half of all appeals."<sup>247</sup>*

Graph 1: Number of Pending Asylum Applications



Source: Quarterly Immigration Statistics, October to December 2016, table as 01 q

**212. Findings:** It is outside the scope of this inquiry to look in detail at the operation of the asylum process. It is clearly in the best interest of both taxpayers and asylum seekers, including those who will be granted refugee status, that the process is working efficiently. Decisions should be made in a timely manner and the vast majority should be correct first time. Additionally, the high level of refusals being overturned on appeal is of concern.

**213. Recommendations:** We recommend that the Home Office, as a priority, examine why the number of cases that have failed to receive an initial decision has more than doubled over a 12 month period. The Home Office should also carefully examine those cases overturned on appeal to identify why so many decisions are being found to be incorrect. If, as may be the case, these problems are being caused due to the system being under resourced, steps should be taken to address this.

**214.** We further recommend that the Government should reduce the restrictions on asylum seekers being able to work, including by removing the limitation that asylum seekers are only able to work in jobs on the shortage occupation list.

### **The asylum system – Borys's experience<sup>248</sup>**

Borys arrived in the UK from Ukraine in February 2014 and applied for asylum. That November his application was refused, with no right of appeal, and he was told to return to Ukraine. He reports struggling to find a solicitor to support his claim. In December 2014, Borys travelled to Sweden to claim asylum there. The Swedish and the UK authorities then disagreed over which country was responsible for his asylum claim. In April 2015, Borys returned to the UK, and claimed asylum again when passing through Heathrow. He was placed in a detention centre for four months, during which time his appeal was refused. His second tribunal appeal was refused.

In August 2015, following the issuing of a Judicial Review, he was released from detention and his asylum claim started all over again. Borys was sent from Wakefield to Bradford and then waited for nine months until he returned to court again. Borys was then granted refugee status in August 2016, two years and six months after initially applying for asylum.

# Chapter 4:

## Refugees Welcome in the UK?

### The two-tier system

215. Throughout our inquiry we were told of a ‘two-tier system’ developing in the way the UK treats and protects refugees. This term was used by those who we spoke to to describe the differences in the support available to, and the resulting difference in experience, between those refugees who arrived through one of the Government’s resettlement schemes and those who had been recognised as refugees after applying for asylum.

216. As we set out in Chapter 2 on the move on period, these differences are apparent from the time refugees are recognised as refugees by the UK government. Whereas refugees who are resettled in the UK receive dedicated support – including being provided with accommodation, support for applying for welfare benefits and help in registering for schools and doctors – there is often a lack of such support for refugees who have been recognised through the UK’s asylum process. The differences were highlighted through the problems relating to the move on period. We were told by those who gave evidence to the inquiry, including those we met in Nottingham and Bristol, that while refugees often struggle to access employment, training, healthcare and other services, resettled refugees are far more likely to be able to gain support to overcome any barriers from their caseworker. Refugees who have come through the asylum route are, we were told, more likely to need to rely on the limited resources of charities, faith based organisations and individuals.

217. During the panel’s visits to Nottingham and Bristol, it also became clear that differences in the level of state-funded support are evident not only in their direct impact on the level of support received and the services that refugees are able to access. Through talking to refugees, we learnt that refugees are very aware of the different levels of support available, particularly in places like Nottingham and Bristol which as well as being cities that

are resettling refugees, also have long histories of hosting refugees who have gone through the asylum process. Some of the refugees to whom we spoke, who had come through the asylum process, said refugees were able to witness the different levels of support provided. The result is that refugees who have come through the asylum route not only receive less support, but may also feel less welcome than those who have been resettled. The different levels of support also create resentment as refugees who have come through the asylum route do not understand why they are being treated differently. One woman to whom we spoke thought she was being discriminated against because of her ethnicity.

**218. Finding: We are concerned that the different levels of support will result in different prospects of successful integration depending on how a refugee has entered the UK. We are also concerned that, due to the different prospects, refugees will have a very different sense of how much they have been welcomed by the UK.**

### The role of local authorities

219. Throughout the inquiry, the central role of local authorities in supporting newly recognised and newly resettled refugees was clear. Heather Bolton and Roy Millard from South East England Councils told us about the experiences of local authorities in welcoming refugees. Heather Bolton emphasised that the “asks are multiple and complex”, when discussing the number of different schemes local authorities are being asked to take part in currently.<sup>249</sup> Roy Millard set out what these ‘multiple asks’ are:

- Widening of the number of local authorities taking part in the dispersal system for the housing of asylum seekers

- Participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme
- Participation in the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme from the Middle East and North Africa
- Family reunion under the Dublin III Regulation
- Transfer of unaccompanied asylum seeking children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the Dubs amendment)
- The national transfer scheme for unaccompanied asylum seeking children<sup>250</sup>

Heather Bolton added that the funding arrangements are different for each of the schemes, which further increases the complexity local authorities face.

### The lack of a UK strategy for all refugees

220. During the inquiry, we were repeatedly told that the lack of a national integration strategy was a substantial hindrance both to the successful integration of refugees and to the welcome that refugees experience. Mike Kaye from Still Human Still Here told us that previous strategies had been shown to have a positive impact on integration.<sup>251</sup> Stephen Hale from Refugee Action said that the UK should be ambitious about the prospect of integrating refugees and the contribution refugees can make.<sup>252</sup> While there are strategies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the resettlement programmes recognise the areas that are key to integration, there is no longer a UK-wide strategy.

221. Nina Murray from Scottish Refugee Council told us about the development of the integration strategy that is in place in Scotland (see box 4). She explained how, following Scottish Refugee Council research into the integration needs of refugees, a collaborative process was undertaken between Scottish Refugee Council, the Scottish Government and local authorities in Scotland to build the strategy. Nina Murray said she thought the process of creating the strategy was almost as important as the final strategy itself as it “brought all of the stakeholders into the room”, and “that was a way of getting buy-in.”<sup>253</sup>

222. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, in their Interim Report into Integration of Immigrants, said of the New Scots strategy that:

*“This outcomes-based response strategy seeks to make the most of available resources by promoting partnership approaches, joined-up working and early intervention. It also seeks to be grounded in refugees’ experiences of life in Scotland. The strategy has expanded to meet the needs and experiences of refugees who are part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme and also demonstrated its efficacy in informing other policy areas in housing, employment, and education.”<sup>254</sup>*

223. The New Scots strategy included identified outcomes as well as specific indicators and measurements of the impact of the scheme. Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, the UNHCR Representative to the UK, welcomed this approach:

*“Equally important is the continued progress on evaluating the integration process. It is our firm belief that this holistic approach has played a vital role in rebuilding the lives of people who have fled conflict and persecution, and empowering them to make positive contributions to their new communities.”<sup>255</sup>*

224. Nina Murray told us of a number of positive outcomes the strategy in Scotland has delivered, including improving the experiences of refugees attempting to access the job market. She said the strategy has also made it easier to “get people around the table” when issues arise. Nina Murray said that over the last three years, there has been a reduction in the length of time refugees report being homeless and the amount of advocacy required to help refugees access services.<sup>256</sup>



#### Box 4: New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

Scottish Refugee Council told us about the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, which was published in December 2013. They described it as "cross-cutting, incorporating stakeholders from a range of policy areas, including health, education, asylum, social security, local government and communities."<sup>257</sup> The Strategy sets out its purpose as:

"to co-ordinate the efforts of all organisations involved in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland in order to make Scotland a welcoming place to people seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses."<sup>258</sup>

It does this through six thematic action plans:

- needs of dispersed asylum seekers
- employability and welfare rights
- housing
- education
- health
- communities and social connections.

Each action plan identifies outcomes to be achieved over the three year timeframe of the strategy.

### Integration as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme

225. Although not described as an integration strategy, the Government has produced a statement of requirements for local authorities taking part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme that incorporates many of the factors considered to support successful integration.<sup>259</sup> It requires the local authority to "provide advice and assistance with registering for mainstream benefits and services and signposting to other advice and information giving agencies".<sup>260</sup> This includes registering with local schools, a local MP, providing support with access to employment, and referral to mental health services as appropriate. Local authorities are required to put in place a 12 month long support plan for each individual or family resettled, and to provide ESOL classes at an appropriate level within one month of a refugee's arrival.

#### Box 5: The Syrian Resettlement Programme in Bradford<sup>261</sup>

Horton Housing Association, in Bradford, works with Bradford Council to provide accommodation, housing, healthcare and wrap-around support for 12 months to allow a family to settle into their new life in the UK.

Before arrival, a multi-agency meeting is held with partners including health, education and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Appropriate housing and school places are secured. The day after arrival, information is provided about the support new arrivals will receive, including information about housing, health, police and education. Refugees are allocated a support worker and taken to their new homes. The support worker helps them to settle into the house and introduces them to the local amenities.

Health screening is carried out by a specialist healthcare provider, education assessments are carried out for the children and welfare benefit application forms completed. Refugees are supported to apply for biometric permits. Support workers carry out a full needs assessment with each family and ESOL tutors will also carry out an assessment to see what English lessons are needed.

Individual Support and Integration Plans are developed with each family or client and additional support identified where necessary. ESOL and cultural orientation classes start and support with CV writing, translation of qualifications and job search begins.

In the first year, clients receive regular visits from their support workers to support integration and pick up any problems that may arise. Support tapers off towards the end of 12 months as independence increases. Clients are encouraged to engage in community activities and events, attend training, voluntary work and employment. The Support and Integration Plan is reviewed at least every three months and updated as necessary.

226. Nina Murray from the Scottish Refugee Council told us that the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme shows there is a recognition on behalf of the Government of the need for support for new refugees.<sup>262</sup> Box 5 sets out how the Syrian programme has been

operating in Bradford. The difference between the level of support provided to resettled refugees and the lack of support for refugees who have been through the asylum process is clearly apparent. The Syrian resettlement programme has demonstrated strong partnership working between central, regional and local government, as well as with national and local charities, community groups and faith organisations. This represents the full range of actors required to ensure that refugees are welcomed in the UK and are able to integrate. Heather Bolton from South East England Councils said that she was hopeful the best practice that is emerging from local authorities being involved in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme would be able to be applied to support refugees who have come through the asylum system.<sup>263</sup>

### Local Community Refugee Welcome

227. Throughout the inquiry, we heard of the desire within communities to welcome refugees. Faith groups, community organisations and individuals have all been increasingly involved in playing a role in welcoming refugees in the UK.

228. When we asked Jonathan, from the Survivors Speak out Network, whether he felt refugees were welcomed in the UK, he said that to answer that he would divide it into two parts. He said that the asylum system did not make him feel welcome, and that he was traumatised and angry during the five years it took him to get his refugee status. However, Jonathan told us that the welcome he got from people was very different. At a time when he was destitute and homeless while trying to get refugee status, he was supported by a church, he was given a home by a family, and welcomed into the community.<sup>264</sup>

229. Steve Symonds from Amnesty International told us:

*“Amnesty members, as well as our individual groups – we have hundreds across the UK – keep responding to us about not just the amount of activity that they’re engaged in also but the level of activity they are both supporting and are now part of that is not Amnesty activity but that is local responses. These local responses are not only to campaigning for a good welcome for refugees but are also preparing and providing it. So people are*

*organising themselves to be interpreters, to be English language teachers, to provide independent visitors for unaccompanied children, all those sorts of social supportive roles that individual people can play.”<sup>265</sup>*

230. Stephen Hale from Refugee Action described the response to an advertisement for two volunteers to work with Syrian refugees. He told us that for those two volunteer posts they received 179 applications.<sup>266</sup> Roy Bolton from South East England Councils told us that the Strategic Migration Board had received 78 offers via the register on the gov.uk website from individuals who wanted to help support refugees in some way. Some of the organisations we spoke to said that they were struggling to cope with the number of offers of voluntary support. We were told that organisations sometimes struggled to be able to provide the management and structure for volunteers.

### Kolbassia, Survivors Speak Out

*“I’m part of this country, I need to make this country great. And that is the case for most refugees who are here. We are very grateful for what is given to us, and we want to do everything to repay this country. But we need help and that help will come from policy makers.”<sup>267</sup>*

231. The evidence we received has shown that there are individuals, charities, faith groups and local authorities who all want to help welcome refugees. A lot of this support is already being provided, but there is capacity to do more.

# Chapter 5:

## A National Refugee Integration Strategy

232. In the preceding chapters, we have identified a number of barriers to integration for refugees. We have also highlighted areas of good practice and the important role volunteers and members of local communities are playing in successfully welcoming refugees. We believe that these successes provide an opportunity and the background to allow all refugees to be welcomed in the UK. However, there is a potential for communities to better welcome refugees and for refugees to be provided with more opportunities to successfully integrate and contribute to the UK.

**233. Findings: There is evidence from across the UK about the benefits of having a strategy for the integration of refugees. In the statement of requirements for the Syrian resettlement programme the UK Government identifies many of the areas that are required for successful integration. It is welcome that the Government sees the need to offer support and advice to refugees. However, given that recognition by the Government, it is concerning that there isn't the same support or advice available to refugees who have gone through the asylum process. This has resulted in two-tiers of experience for refugees depending on how they came to being protected in the UK.**

**234. Recommendation: We recommend that the UK Government should develop and introduce a National Refugee Integration Strategy that is applicable to all refugees in the UK. The purpose of the strategy is to coordinate support for refugees so that they are able to rebuild their lives and to make full use of their talents and abilities to take part in and contribute to British society.**

235. The National Refugee Integration Strategy should, as a minimum, include the following areas:

- Transition from asylum support to other forms of financial support and accommodation
- ESOL provision
- Employment and Training
- Health and Wellbeing
- Access to education
- Community Empowerment

### Transition from asylum support to other forms of financial support and accommodation

236. The move on period currently results in newly recognised refugees facing homelessness and destitution. The Strategy should include the provision of support and advice for newly recognised to navigate the transition away from Home Office support. As we recommend in Chapter 2, to help with the transition, the length of the move on period should also be extended to at least 50 days to reflect the reality of how long it takes newly recognised refugees to access financial support and accommodation.

### ESOL provision

237. Reductions in funding have clearly had an impact on the availability of English language classes for refugees. As well as expanding current areas of provision, as more local authorities host refugees through the resettlement programmes and as a result of the widening dispersal programme, those local authorities which do not have a history of providing ESOL will need to introduce new services. As part of the integration strategy, the Government

should create a strategy for ESOL provision, building on the good work already being done as part of the support provided to resettled Syrian refugees, such as appointing regional coordinators and exploring innovative ways of providing classes. To support this, the Government will need to increase the level of funding for ESOL classes.

### Employment and Training

238. The Syrian Resettlement Programme requires local authorities to support refugees in accessing the labour market, and there are examples of local authorities providing excellent support including through CV workshops and help with translating qualifications. Other organisations also have experience in supporting refugees into employment. The integration strategy should explore how more refugees can access this support. Jobcentre staff should be aware of the support refugees may need in accessing the job market and be able to refer individuals to those organisations who are able to support.

### Health and Wellbeing

239. The integration strategy will ensure that refugees are able to access the healthcare services that they need. This includes having their health needs identified and being referred to relevant organisations, such as Freedom from Torture. The Department of Health should work with Clinical Commissioning Groups in areas where there will be refugees to ensure the necessary services are available, including through the provision of interpreters. All healthcare staff should be aware that refugees are eligible for NHS treatment.

### Community Empowerment

240. Successful integration cannot be delivered by statutory services alone. The Government has taken some steps to work with community organisations to support refugees, including through the community sponsorship programme and national 'Help refugees in the UK' register, and there is lots of evidence of successful partnerships between local authorities and local groups. The strategy should encourage and facilitate partnership working between all levels of government and the voluntary sector. It should be underpinned by respect for the self-agency of refugees and recognition of the communities they are part of and live in.

### Monitoring integration

241. Still Human Still Here told us that previously, the Home Office had identified a number of indicators for monitoring integration: "the employment rates of refugees; the levels of English language attainment over time; the number of refugees involved in voluntary work; the numbers of refugees in touch with community organisations; the proportion of refugees taking up British citizenship; and the proportion of refugees reporting harassment."<sup>268</sup> Stephen Hale from Refugee Action told us that there are currently no data available on the employment rates of refugees and the number of refugees accessing ESOL classes.<sup>269</sup> Without this information, there is no baseline to measure current levels of refugee integration. The strategy should identify clear goals and outcomes, and measurable indicators to chart progress towards successful integration.

### A Minister for Refugees

242. A complicating factor in the successful integration of refugees is that there is no single Minister responsible for it. The ability for refugees to successfully integrate is affected by policy and practice from several Government departments. The legislation setting out the length of the move on period is the responsibility of the Home Office. Both resettled refugees and those who come through the asylum route are still subject to immigration control, at least for the first five years after they receive their refugee status. The Home Office is, therefore, clearly highly involved in the lives of refugees. Access to welfare benefits comes under the remit of the Department for Work and Pensions, while ESOL provision is the responsibility of the Department for Education. Assistance in accessing the workplace also sits with the Department for Work and Pensions, while the health needs of refugees need to be met by the Department of Health. The important role of local authorities also means that the Department for Communities and Local Government play an important part in supporting integration and providing a welcome for refugees.

243. Given the need for cross-Government work to successfully integrate refugees, we believe that overall responsibility should sit with one Minister. Following the expansion of the Syrian resettlement programme in September 2015, Richard Harrington was appointed as Minister for Syrian refugees. The Minister sat jointly within the Home Office, the Department for International

Development and the Department for Communities and Local Government. Since the summer of 2016, that Ministerial position no longer exists. The previous experience, including the success in securing enough pledges from local authorities to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020, shows the value of a single minister with overall responsibility for an area of policy that cuts across various government departments.

244. We are also aware that local authorities are currently being asked to take part in a number of different schemes, including the Syrian resettlement programme, the Gateway Resettlement Scheme, the dispersal programme, the resettlement programme of children at risk from the Middle East and North Africa, the transfer scheme for unaccompanied children, and the relocation of children under the Dubs amendment. Different programmes come with different requirements for local authorities, as well as different levels of funding. This further increases the likelihood of different integration outcomes for different groups of refugees.

**245. Recommendations: We recommend that the Government should appoint a Minister for Refugees, with responsibility for refugee integration. The Minister should work across departments and an immediate priority of the minister should be to develop and publish a National Refugee Integration Strategy. The strategy should apply to all refugees, no matter their route of entry to the UK.**

246. Following the referendum result of 23 June 2016 and the vote to leave the European Union, there will be a need to develop a new, post-Brexit immigration system. Part of that system, and of showing that the UK remains global-facing, should be a refugee policy based on compassion that allows refugees to rebuild their lives and for the UK to benefit from the talent and resilience that refugees can bring. The Minister for Refugees and the National Refugee Integration Strategy should be central in shaping that policy.

**247. Recommendation: the Minister for Refugees should also set up a stakeholding forum with members of civil society, faith groups, local authorities and officials from the relevant Government departments to help to develop and then oversee the implementation of the National Refugee Integration Strategy.**

## “Not everybody is Mo Farah”

248. The purpose of the recommendations we have made, especially the introduction of a Refugee Integration Strategy and a Minister for Refugees, is to ensure refugees are welcome and are supported to successfully integrate in the UK. Not only would doing so mean that the protection the UK provides to refugees would be improved, but it also means that the UK is better able to benefit from the skills and abilities that refugees bring. As Kolbassia from the Survivors Speak Out network told us *“not everybody is Mo Farah, but everybody has something to give to this country.”*<sup>270</sup>

# Conclusion

249. We called this inquiry “Refugees Welcome?” because we wanted to ask to what extent refugees are welcome in the UK. We allude to the history the UK has of welcoming refugees in this report, and politicians of all colours often invoke that history. But the conclusion we draw from our inquiry is that we cannot rest on our laurels. The UK has legal, and moral, obligations to provide refugees with protection, but protection must be more than a piece of paper declaring someone to be a refugee.

250. During this inquiry we received nearly 100 pieces of written evidence, held four evidence sessions in parliament and travelled to Bristol and Nottingham. What we learnt was that in many parts of the UK, refugees are being welcomed and being welcomed successfully. Yet we also learnt there is a two tier system of support; that Government policy leaves many newly recognised refugees at risk of homelessness and destitution; and that there is still plenty to do to make sure refugees and the communities that host them are able to thrive.

251. We have heard of the determination refugees have as well as the challenges they face and many barriers they have to deal with. Refugees want to integrate. They want to contribute their skills, qualifications, experiences and knowledge. They want to be with their families. They want to be safe.

252. The recommendations we have made in this report, particularly the introduction of a National Refugee Integration Strategy and a Minister for Refugees, are aimed at helping refugees to meet those challenges and to lower those barriers.

253. The impact of a National Refugee Integration Strategy, with a Minister for Refugees to oversee its implementation, will benefit both refugees and local communities. There are already models and experience of integration strategies to draw on, both historic and current. Having joined up policies across Government

departments and across levels of Government would not only benefit refugees, but also save money in the long run. It would help ease and prevent community misunderstanding and tensions.

254. The Government does not need to do this alone. During our inquiry we heard about the individuals and community groups who are already welcoming and supporting refugees. The National Refugee Integration Strategy would strengthen and support those efforts. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, now is the time for the Government to ensure that our refugee policy reflects the desire for the UK to remain outward facing and compassionate.

# Recommendations

## The Move on Period

We recommend that when the Home Office informs people that their application for asylum has been granted, they should include whether or not that person will be receiving a NINo or if they need to apply for one themselves. Additionally, as the substantive interview is not the most appropriate stage of the asylum process to carry out the NINo application, and details required for a NINo application are all gathered at the initial, or 'screening', interview stage, we also recommend that the NINo application should be completed at the screening interview. (Paragraph 38)

We recommend that, particularly in areas with high numbers of refugees or areas that are accommodating refugees for the first time, the Department for Work and Pensions and the JobCentre should explore active approaches, such as that suggested by the British Red Cross, to ensure staff have all the necessary knowledge they need. (Paragraph 44)

We recommend that the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions should ensure that the first payment of Universal Credit is made within the move on period. This might be achieved either through extending the length of the move on period, or, failing that, bringing forward the timing of the first payment. We also recommend that the online application form for Universal Credit should be changed so that it can be submitted without having to provide bank details. (Paragraph 50)

Newly recognised refugees should be added to the list of groups exempt from the seven day waiting period for Universal Credit. (Paragraph 53)

We recommend that the Financial Conduct Authority should issue clear guidance to banks regarding the documentation that newly recognised refugees will have. Banks should ensure their staff receive comprehensive training so that they are familiar with the type of identify

documents refugees will have access to, as part of the wider work to ensure financially excluded people have access to financial services. (Paragraph 58)

The Home Office must ensure that refugees are not excluded from the private rented sector due to the 'right to rent' law. (Paragraph 64)

The Home Office should fast track applications for integration loans where the money will be used to cover housing costs. The maximum amount payable as a loan should be monitored and adjusted as necessary to ensure newly recognised refugees are able use the loan to cover their deposit and first month's rent. (Paragraph 79)

We recommend that the Government extend the move on period to at least 50 days, reflecting the time it takes in reality for refugees to access accommodation and financial support, especially with the introduction of Universal Credit. The length should be kept under review: newly recognised refugees should not experience a gap in their support. (Paragraph 92)

In addition to increasing the length of the move on period to 50 days, we recommend that the Government should re-introduce a programme of support to newly recognised refugees similar to that provided by the Refugee Integration and Employment Service. The support should include the provision of a caseworker to help and advise newly recognised refugees during the move on period. (Paragraph 102)

## Integration After the Move On Period

We recommend that the Government create a strategy for ESOL provision in England, building on the good work already being done as part of the support provided to resettled Syrian refugees, such as appointing regional coordinators and exploring innovative ways of providing classes. To achieve this, the Government will need to increase the level of funding for ESOL classes. The strategy

should also include support for voluntary groups providing conversation classes as additional language support alongside ESOL classes. This support may not necessarily be financial, but could include training and advice to ensure such provision is of a good standard. (Paragraph 121)

Central Government should work with local authorities to ensure that more refugees, including those who have been recognised as refugees after applying for asylum in the UK, are able to access support to find employment. Jobcentre staff should be aware of the support refugees may need in accessing the job market and be able to refer individuals to those organisations who are able to support them. (Paragraph 131)

We recommend that individuals with humanitarian protection, including but not limited to resettled Syrian refugees, should be able to access student support immediately upon being given their status, in the same way that those granted refugee status are. (Paragraph 139)

The Department of Health should work with Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure that all healthcare professionals are aware of the entitlements refugees have to NHS treatment and the forms of documentation refugees are likely to be able to provide. Clinical Commissioning Groups should review the availability of mental and physical health services available to refugees within their area, and incorporate the findings of those reviews into future commissioning decisions. The Department of Health should provide a forum for Clinical Commissioning Groups to share their best practice and positive experiences of providing services to refugees. Where the Home Office has identified refugees as having a particular health need, whether that was through a health assessment or through an asylum claim, the local authority and commissioning group should be informed. (Paragraph 156)

When NINo applications are made as part of an asylum application, they should be made by all applicants who would be eligible for a NINo, not just the principle applicant. The Department for Education should work with ESOL providers to ensure women with child caring responsibilities are able to access classes, including through the provision of adequate child care. (Paragraph 164)

The Department for Education should ensure schools are supported in providing support for refugee children, including through the dissemination of best practice. The

leave given to unaccompanied children should provide durable solutions and a secure future. (Paragraph 173)

We recommend that as part of the review into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, the Government should look closely at the impact removing legal aid from refugee family reunion cases has had. We also recommend that the Home Office should work with applicants to ensure the necessary evidence is submitted when applying, and this should include the reinstatement of government funding for DNA testing where appropriate. (Paragraph 193)

The Home Office should amend the Immigration Rules so that adult refugees in the UK are able to sponsor any dependent relative. The Immigration Rules should also be amended to allow unaccompanied child refugees to sponsor their parents and siblings. (Paragraph 195)

The Home Office should amend their policy guidance to remove safe return reviews for refugees applying for settlement. (Paragraph 200)

We recommend that the Home Office, as a priority, examine why the number of cases that have failed to receive an initial decision has more than doubled over a 12 month period. The Home Office should also carefully examine those cases overturned on appeal to identify why so many decisions are being found to be incorrect. If, as may be the case, these problems are being caused due to the system being under resourced, steps should be taken to address this. (Paragraph 213)

We further recommend that the Government should reduce the restrictions on asylum seekers being able to work, including by removing the limitation that asylum seekers are only able to work in jobs on the shortage occupation list. (Paragraph 214)

## A National Refugee Integration Strategy

We recommend that the UK Government should develop and introduce a National Refugee Integration Strategy that is applicable to all refugees in the UK. The purpose of the strategy is to coordinate support for refugees so that they are able to rebuild their lives and to make full use of their talents and abilities to take part in and contribute to British society. (Paragraph 234)



We recommend that the Government should appoint a Minister for Refugees, with responsibility for refugee integration. The Minister should work across departments and an immediate priority of the minister should be to develop and publish a National Refugee Integration Strategy. The strategy should apply to all refugees, no matter their route of entry to the UK. (Paragraph 245)

The Minister for Refugees should also set up a stakeholding forum with members of civil society, faith groups, local authorities and officials from the relevant Government departments to help to develop and then oversee the implementation of the National Refugee Integration Strategy. (Paragraph 247)

# Annex 1:

## Terms of Reference

The inquiry will explore the experiences of refugees who have either been recently recognised as refugees after making an application for asylum in the UK or who have been resettled to the UK. In particular, the inquiry will examine the support available, both from statutory bodies and civil society, and how this helps refugees to feel welcome and integrate in the UK. This includes, but is not limited to consideration of:

- the effectiveness of any Government refugee integration strategy
- the support available to refugees to help them gain access to the job market, education and other services
- what impact, if any, the type of immigration leave granted to refugees in the UK has on their integration
- what differences there are in the support available to refugees who have arrived in the UK after being resettled compared to those who have gone through the UK asylum system
- what barriers, if any, there are to refugees integrating in the UK
- whether there are particular barriers to integration faced by different groups of refugees, for example by women, children or LGBTI refugees

The panel will also look at what measures are in place to support communities who are providing a home to refugees and what more could be done to support those communities.

### Submitting Evidence

The inquiry panel invites written evidence from a broad range of stakeholders, including government representatives and civil servants, local authorities, charities, researchers, and voluntary organisations working with refugees and refugees themselves. Evidence from

people who have direct personal experience of the support systems for newly arrived and newly recognised refugees in the UK is particularly welcome.

For people who have experience of being a refugee in the UK, the panel would welcome evidence about:

- What were your experiences of being a newly resettled or newly recognised refugee in the UK?
- Did you/do you have any support from any organisations to help you access services, such as doctors' appointments or housing?
- Were there/are there any services that were easier to access? Were there/are there any services that were more difficult to access?

For organisations and people who work with/support refugees in the UK, the panel would welcome evidence regarding:

- How far does current UK policy and legislation allow newly resettled and newly recognised refugees to integrate and rebuild their lives here?
- Are there any particular barriers that newly resettled and newly recognised refugees face?
- Are there any areas of good practice where refugees are being supported successfully? Are there any differences in support in the different regions of the UK?
- Is support provided to vulnerable refugees, including those who are disabled or who have been victims of torture, adequate?
- Do particular groups of new refugees, such as LGBTI refugees or refugee women, face any specific barriers to experiencing a welcome in Britain?
- What support is available to local communities who are accommodating refugees? What more could be done to support local communities who may be impacted by refugees?

We understand that many of the organisations working with refugees are small and/or may only work on specific issues within this inquiry may be unable to provide comprehensive evidence on all points. We would welcome your views on the basis of the experiences and expertise that you have. If you work directly with a small organisation and want help with facilitating a session to gather evidence, we may be able to put you in touch with someone who can help with that. Please see the contact details below.

# References

- 1 Kolbassia, third oral evidence session, 25 October 2016.
- 2 UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015.  
[www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html)
- 3 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951.  
[www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html)
- 4 At the time of writing, no refugees have been resettled through the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme.
- 5 Immigration Statistics, October - December 2016, tables as 02 q and as 19 q.
- 6 Asylum route statistics refer to grants of asylum and other grants, including humanitarian protection, at first instant decision.
- 7 Refugees arriving through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme are not granted refugee status, but instead are given humanitarian protection.
- 8 Home Office (2000), Full and Equal Citizens; a strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom; Home Office (2005), Integration Matters; the national refugee integration strategy; Home Office (2009) Moving on Together; Government's recommitment to supporting refugees.
- 9 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 10 UNHCR, written evidence.
- 11 Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), Creating the conditions for integration.
- 12 Dame Louise Casey (2016), The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration.
- 13 Scottish Government (2013) New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities.
- 14 The Asylum Support (Amendment No.3) Regulations 2015.
- 15 Immigration Statistics, October - December 2016, table as 16 q.
- 16 See regulation 2(2) of The Asylum Support Regulations 2000, as amended by The Asylum Support (Amendment) Regulations 2002.  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/472/regulation/3/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/472/regulation/3/made)  
The 2002 Regulations extended the move on period from 14 days to 28 days.
- 17 UK Visas and Immigration (2009), Refugee Leave.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257395/refugeeleave.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257395/refugeeleave.pdf)
- 18 UK Visas and Immigration (2015), Ceasing asylum support instruction v12.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/460419/Ceasing\\_asylum\\_support\\_v12.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/460419/Ceasing_asylum_support_v12.pdf)
- 19 Home Office ( January 2016), Reforming support for migrants without immigration status: The new system contained in Schedules 8 and 9 to the Immigration Bill, pp.5-6.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/494240/Support.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494240/Support.pdf)
- 20 Biometric Residence Permits.  
[www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/need-brp](http://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/need-brp)  
accessed 3 January 2017
- 21 Procedures for Issuing a National Insurance Number (NINO) to asylum claimants granted leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257444/ninoguidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257444/ninoguidance.pdf)
- 22 Home Office (2016) Reforming support for migrants without immigration status: The new system contained in Schedules 8 and 9 to the Immigration Bill.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/494240/Support.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494240/Support.pdf)
- 23 Karam, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.

- 24 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 25 British Red Cross, written evidence.
- 26 No Accommodation Network, written evidence.
- 27 British Red Cross (2014) The Move-On Period: an ordeal for new refugees.
- 28 Merseyside Refugee Support Network and Network Members, written evidence.
- 29 Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan.
- 30 British Red Cross (2014) The Move-On Period: an ordeal for new refugees.
- 31 Hull Based Organisations, written evidence.
- 32 Procedures for Issuing a National Insurance Number (NINO) to asylum claimants granted leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, p.4.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/257444/ninoguidance.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257444/ninoguidance.pdf)
- 33 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (2016) An Inspection of Asylum Casework: March – July 2015, p.27.
- 34 Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan.
- 35 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, written evidence.
- 36 House of Commons, Written Question 43497, 5 September 2016.
- 37 Sami, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 38 Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan.
- 39 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 40 Hull Based Organisations, written evidence.
- 41 Asylum seekers can only apply for permission to work once they have been waiting for more than 12 months for a decision on their asylum application. Those who are granted permission to work are only allowed to work in occupations found on the shortage occupation list.
- 42 Dr Alison Strang, Helen Baillot and Elodie Mignard (2016), Rights, Resilience and Refugee Integration in Scotland: New Scots & the Holistic Integration Service, p.40.
- 43 See British Red Cross (2014) The Move-On Period: an ordeal for new refugees.
- 44 British Red Cross (2014) The Move-On Period: an ordeal for new refugees & Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan.
- 45 Chloe Morgan, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 46 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 47 Karl Pike, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 48 Written Ministerial Statement, 'Welfare Reform' 20 July 2016, HCWS96.
- 49 Universal Credit, How to Claim.  
[www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim)
- 50 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 51 See [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/universal-credit-an-introduction#claiming-universal-credit](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/universal-credit-an-introduction#claiming-universal-credit)
- 52 Chloe Morgan, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 53 In response to a written question from Baroness Lister, a member of the inquiry panel, Lord Freud said "where people have problems getting a bank account, they are not prevented from making a claim for Universal Credit", House of Lords, 14 December 2016, written question HL3927.
- 54 These exemptions are set out in The Universal Credit (Waiting Days) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
- 55 See Report by the Social Security Advisory Committee under Section 174(1) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 and statement by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in accordance with Section 174(2) of that Act on The Universal Credit (Waiting Days) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015 No. 1362).
- 56 Liverpool Asylum Seekers and Refugees Association, written evidence; Sheffield groups, written evidence; Hull groups, written evidence;.

- 57 Leeds Refugee Testimonies, written evidence.
- 58 See '8 ways banking has been made easier'.  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/7-ways-banking-has-been-made-easier](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/7-ways-banking-has-been-made-easier)
- 59 Financial Exclusion Commission, 'Financial Inclusion: Improving the financial health of the nation'.  
[www.financialinclusioncommission.org.uk/report](http://www.financialinclusioncommission.org.uk/report)
- 60 Liverpool Asylum Seekers and Refugees, written evidence.
- 61 Bristol Refugee Forum, written evidence.
- 62 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 63 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 64 See, for example, Action Foundation's written evidence.
- 65 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, written evidence.
- 66 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 67 Leeds based organisations, written evidence.
- 68 Sheffield Organisations, written evidence.
- 69 Survivors Speak Out and Freedom from Torture, written evidence.
- 70 Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan, p.25.
- 71 Awate, written evidence.
- 72 Sheffield Organisations, written evidence.
- 73 The Home Affairs Select Committee reported that at the end of September 2016, there were 121 local authorities that were dispersal areas House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Asylum Accommodation, Twelfth Report of Session 2016-17, HC637.
- 74 Scottish Refugee Council (2011) A Practitioners' Guide to Housing Refugees.
- 75 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 76 Kolbassia, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 77 Liverpool Asylum Seekers and Refugees Association, written evidence.
- 78 See [www.gov.uk/refugee-integration-loan/overview](http://www.gov.uk/refugee-integration-loan/overview)  
The legislation governing the payment of integration loans for refugees is found in The Integration Loans for Refugees and Others Regulations 2007, made under section 13 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004.
- 79 HL Deb, 3 May 2007, c1253.
- 80 Integration loans policy guidance.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410929/Updated\\_loan\\_guidance\\_2015\\_v1\\_8.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410929/Updated_loan_guidance_2015_v1_8.pdf)
- 81 Integration loans policy guidance.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410929/Updated\\_loan\\_guidance\\_2015\\_v1\\_8.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410929/Updated_loan_guidance_2015_v1_8.pdf)
- 82 Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan, p.26.
- 83 HL Deb, 3 May 2007, c1252.
- 84 See Refugee Council (2016) England's Forgotten Refugees: Out of the fire and into the frying pan, pp.26-8.
- 85 Integration loans policy guidance.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/410929/Updated\\_loan\\_guidance\\_2015\\_v1\\_8.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410929/Updated_loan_guidance_2015_v1_8.pdf), p.5
- 86 House of Commons, Written Question 39223, 8 June 2016.
- 87 Home Office response to Freedom of Information request.  
[www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/285433/response/706523/attach/3/36428%20Response.pdf](http://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/285433/response/706523/attach/3/36428%20Response.pdf)
- 88 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 89 Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, written evidence.
- 90 Double death in asylum seeker family reveals gap in state benefits, The Guardian, 5 October 2012.
- 91 Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, written evidence.
- 92 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 93 Stoke on Trent, written evidence.

- 94 House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2015–16, Benefit delivery, (HC 372).
- 95 See amendments 228 and 229, Second Marshalled List of Amendments to Be Moved in Committee, [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2015-2016/0079/amend/ml079-II.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2015-2016/0079/amend/ml079-II.htm)
- 96 HL Deb 3 Feb 2016. c1843.
- 97 HL Deb 15 Mar 2016. C1837.
- 98 House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 3rd Special Report of Session 2016-17- Benefit delivery: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015–16.
- 99 House of Commons, 9 February 2017, Written Answer 63202.
- 100 House of Lords, 9 February 2017, Written Answer HL5258.
- 101 Strang, A. et al (2016) Rights, Resilience and Refugee Integration in Scotland. New Scots and the Holistic Integration Service: A report sharing insights from the Holistic Integration Service 2013-16, Scottish Refugee Council and Queen Margaret University, at [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full\\_Integration\\_Report\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf)
- 102 For more information on the operation of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, see the National Audit Office's report on the programme, available at [www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Syrian-Vulnerable-Persons-Resettlement-programme.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Syrian-Vulnerable-Persons-Resettlement-programme.pdf)
- 103 HL Deb, 1 Nov 2016, c540.
- 104 United Kingdom proposals for the allocations provided to it through the third phase of the European Refugee Fund from 2008-2013 (ERF III). [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/453111/multi\\_annual\\_programmeerfiii\\_2008\\_2013.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/453111/multi_annual_programmeerfiii_2008_2013.pdf)
- 105 HC Deb, 17 Jan 2014, c720W.
- 106 HL Deb, 14 Mar 2011, cWA23.
- 107 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 108 Jonathan, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 109 Chloe Morgan, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 110 House Of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 'The Work of the Immigration Directorates (Q1 2016)', Sixth Report of Session 2016-17, HC151.
- 111 Dame Louise Casey (2016), The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration.
- 112 Dame Louise Casey (2016), The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration, p.5.
- 113 All Party Parliamentary Group on Integration, Interim Report into Integration of Immigration – 5 January 2017.
- 114 Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral Evidence: Integration Reviews, HC881, Monday 9 January 2017, Q12.
- 115 UNHCR, written evidence.
- 116 Refugee Council (2004), Agenda for Integration, available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/6370/agenda\\_integ\\_nov04.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/6370/agenda_integ_nov04.pdf)
- 117 Survivors Speak Out, written evidence.
- 118 Chloe Morgan, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 119 See, for example, Merseyside Refugee Support Network, written evidence.
- 120 Lilav, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 121 During the visit to Nottingham, we were told of research undertaken by Citizens UK Nottingham into the experience of asylum seekers and refugees locally. The research was completed through questionnaire and discussion groups.
- 122 Refugee Action, written evidence.
- 123 Skills Funding Agency (2016), Adult education budget funding and performance management rules: For the 2016 to 2017 funding year (1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017). Version 3.
- 124 Refugee Action, written evidence.
- 125 Refugee Action, written evidence.
- 126 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.

- 127 Refugee Action, written evidence.
- 128 Action Language, written evidence.
- 129 Action Language, written evidence.
- 130 See also Action Language, written evidence.
- 131 Lilav, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016; Action Language, written evidence.
- 132 First anniversary of government commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees.  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/first-anniversary-of-government-commitment-to-resettle-20000-syrian-refugees](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-anniversary-of-government-commitment-to-resettle-20000-syrian-refugees).
- 133 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 134 Q24, Oral evidence: The Work of the Immigration Directorates (Q2 2016), HC 651, Tuesday 6 Sep 2016.  
[data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-work-of-the-immigration-directorates-q2-2016/oral/37358.html](http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-work-of-the-immigration-directorates-q2-2016/oral/37358.html)
- 135 Letter from Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Immigration, to the Chair of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 18 November 2016.  
[data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-work-of-the-immigration-directorates-q2-2016/written/43505.html](http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-work-of-the-immigration-directorates-q2-2016/written/43505.html).
- 136 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 137 We address asylum seekers and access to the Labour market in more detail later in this report.
- 138 Wrexham Council, written evidence.
- 139 British Refugee Forum, written evidence.
- 140 Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 141 Building Bridges, Impact Report 2015-16.  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0003/8908/Building\\_Bridges\\_Impact\\_Report\\_2015-2016.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0003/8908/Building_Bridges_Impact_Report_2015-2016.pdf)
- 142 Refugee Health Professionals – Building Bridges Programmes.  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/refugee\\_services/refugees\\_into\\_jobs/refugee\\_health\\_professionals](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/refugee_services/refugees_into_jobs/refugee_health_professionals)
- 143 Bristol Refugee Forum, written evidence.
- 144 See, for example, Abiey Legesse Workie, written evidence.
- 145 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 146 Home Office, Spotlight on refugee integration: findings from the Survey on New Refugees in the UK, Research Report 37, July 2010.
- 147 Department of Geography, University of Sussex, written evidence.
- 148 Wrexham Council, written evidence.
- 149 Lilav, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 150 Student Action for Refugees, written evidence.
- 151 Student Action for Refugees, written evidence.
- 152 SOAS Refugee Scholarships.  
[www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/soas-refugee-scholarships---201617.html](http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/soas-refugee-scholarships---201617.html)
- 153 Balliol Students' Scholarship 2017.  
[www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/balliol\\_refugee\\_scholarship\\_2017.pdf](http://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/balliol_refugee_scholarship_2017.pdf)
- 154 London School of Economics Refugee Scholarships.  
[www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/moneyMatters/financialSupport/ScholarshipsLSE/MScApp/RefugeeScholarships.aspx](http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/moneyMatters/financialSupport/ScholarshipsLSE/MScApp/RefugeeScholarships.aspx)
- 155 House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme, Thirty-fourth Report of Session 2016-17, HC 768, p.10.
- 156 HL Deb, 25 January 2017, c720.
- 157 HL Deb, 25 January 2017, c723.
- 158 HL Deb, 25 January 2017, c725.
- 159 HL Deb, 13 March 2017, c1667.
- 160 HL Deb, 13 March 2017, c1667.
- 161 Doctors of the World, written evidence.
- 162 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 163 Doctors of the World, written evidence; Mike Kaye, Still Human Still Here, first evidence session, 25 October 2016.
- 164 Doctors of the World, written evidence.



- 165 See, for example, Doctors of the World, written evidence.
- 166 Jonathan, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 167 West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 11 October 2016.
- 168 Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 16 September 2016.
- 169 For example, see West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 11 October 2016.
- 170 Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 31 October 2016.
- 171 Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 31 October 2016.
- 172 Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 29 September 2016.
- 173 Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 29 September 2016.
- 174 Doctors of the World, written evidence.
- 175 Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 27 September 2016.
- 176 Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 8 September 2016.
- 177 Leeds refugee testimonies, written evidence.
- 178 House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme, Thirty-fourth Report of Session 2016-17, HC768.
- 179 Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 13 October 2016.
- 180 Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 8 September 2016.
- 181 Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group, letter to the inquiry, 29 September 2016.
- 182 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 183 See paragraph 249 of The Immigration Rules.
- 184 Immigration statistics, July to September 2016, tabled as 03 and as 04.
- 185 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 186 Scottish Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 187 Scottish Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 188 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 189 Women for Refugee Women, written evidence.
- 190 Refugee Action, written evidence.
- 191 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 192 Pip Johnson and Stewart MacLachlan, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 193 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 194 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 195 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 196 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 197 National Union of Teachers, written evidence.
- 198 National Union of Teachers, written evidence; the resources can be found at [www.teachers.org.uk/equality/equality-matters](http://www.teachers.org.uk/equality/equality-matters)
- 199 Stewart MacLachlan, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 200 Coram Children's Legal Centre, written evidence.
- 201 Over the last 18 months, there has been some debate within parliament regarding whether the eligibility criteria for refugee family reunion should be extended. See the House of Commons library briefing note for further information: The UK's family reunion rules: striking the right balance? Available at [researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7511](http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7511)
- 202 See Part 11 of the Immigration Rules.
- 203 Chloe Morgan, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 204 British Red Cross, written evidence.
- 205 Bristol Refugee Forum, written evidence.
- 206 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.

## Refugees Welcome?

---

207 See Ministry of Justice, 'Reform of Legal Aid in England and Wales: the Government Response', June 2011.

208 House of Commons, 15 February 2017, Written Answer 60702.

209 There are some exemptions to this. See How to become a regulated immigration adviser.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser) for more information

210 How to become a regulated immigration adviser.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser/how-to-become-a-regulated-immigration-adviser)

211 See Guidance on Competence: Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, available at.

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/327534/guidance\\_on\\_competence\\_2012.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/327534/guidance_on_competence_2012.pdf)

212 Karl Pike, second evidence session, 1 November 2016; British Red Cross, written evidence.

213 British Red Cross, written evidence.

214 Bristol Refugee Forum, written evidence.

215 Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, An inspection of family reunion applications – January to May 2016.

216 Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, An inspection of family reunion applications – January to May 2016, p.2.

217 Home Office, The Home Office response to the Independent Chief Inspector's report: 'An Inspection of Family Reunion Applications' January – May 2016, available at.

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/553190/Home\\_Office\\_Response\\_to\\_ICI\\_Report\\_on\\_Family\\_Reunion\\_Applications.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/553190/Home_Office_Response_to_ICI_Report_on_Family_Reunion_Applications.pdf)

218 UNHCR (2016), Family Reunion in the United Kingdom (UK): Briefing Paper, available at.

[www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/basic/576019c67/family-reunion-in-the-united-kingdom-briefing-paper-2016-576019c67.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/basic/576019c67/family-reunion-in-the-united-kingdom-briefing-paper-2016-576019c67.html)

219 British Red Cross, written evidence.

220 British Red Cross, written evidence.

221 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence.

222 Coram Children's Legal Centre, written evidence.

223 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence.

224 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence .

225 Coram Children's Legal Centre, written evidence.

226 City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, written evidence.

227 Usually, family members coming to the UK under the refugee family reunion rules are given the same length of leave and entitlements as the family member they are joining. However, family members granted permission to come to the UK outside of the rules, under the discretion of Home Office decision makers, are usually given limited leave to remain for 36 months and without immediate access to welfare support.

228 See, for example, Refugees applying to live in UK face being sent home after five years, The Guardian, 9 March 2017, [bit.ly/2m522Ov](http://bit.ly/2m522Ov).

229 See Home Office, Refugee Leave v4.0, published 9 March 2017.

230 Home Office, Refugee Leave v4.0, published 9 March 2017.

231 Home Office, Refugee Leave v4.0, published 9 March 2017.

232 UNHCR UK.

[www.facebook.com/unhcr.uk/posts/1428639907207908](https://www.facebook.com/unhcr.uk/posts/1428639907207908). Accessed 15 March 2017

233 Colin Yeo, Home Office ends policy of automatic settlement for refugees after five years, 9 March 2017.

[www.freemovement.org.uk/home-office-ends-policy-automatic-settlement-refugees-five-years/](http://www.freemovement.org.uk/home-office-ends-policy-automatic-settlement-refugees-five-years/)

234 Women for Refugee Women, written evidence.

235 Women for Refugee Women, written evidence.

236 UNHCR, written evidence.

237 APPG on Refugees and APPG on Migration (2015) The Use of Immigration Detention in the United Kingdom, available at.

[www.detentioninquiry.com](http://www.detentioninquiry.com)

- 238 House of Commons, Written Statement: Response to Stephen Shaw's report into the Welfare in Detention of Vulnerable Persons, 14 January 2016, HCWS470.
- 239 House of Commons, 6 Feb 2017, written answer 62993.
- 240 For the full shortage occupation list as of November 2015.  
[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/486107/Shortage\\_Occupation\\_List\\_-\\_November\\_2015.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486107/Shortage_Occupation_List_-_November_2015.pdf)
- 241 Mike Kaye, first oral evidence session, 25 October 2016.
- 242 Leeds organisations, written evidence.
- 243 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence.
- 244 House of Commons, 29 November 2016, c552WH.
- 245 Immigration Statistics, October to December 2016, table as 01 q.
- 246 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence.
- 247 Immigration Law Practitioners Association, written evidence.
- 248 Leeds Refugee Testimonies, written evidence.
- 249 Heather Bolton, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 250 Roy Millard, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 251 Mike Kaye, first oral evidence session, 25 October 2016.
- 252 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 253 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 254 All Party Parliamentary Group on Integration, Interim Report into Integration of Immigration – 5 January 2017.
- 255 Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, UNHCR Representative to the UK, as quoted in Scottish Government (2015) New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities, YEAR 1: Implementation Progress Report.
- 256 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 257 Scottish Refugee Council, written evidence.
- 258 Scottish Government (2013) New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities.
- 259 Statement of requirements for local authorities taking part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.  
[www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/Syrian+VPR+Statement+of+requirements.pdf/8b2c4d78-57da-474e-a9ef-c61a56809bc9](http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/Syrian+VPR+Statement+of+requirements.pdf/8b2c4d78-57da-474e-a9ef-c61a56809bc9)
- 260 Statement of requirements for local authorities taking part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.  
[www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/Syrian+VPR+Statement+of+requirements.pdf/8b2c4d78-57da-474e-a9ef-c61a56809bc9](http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/6869714/Syrian+VPR+Statement+of+requirements.pdf/8b2c4d78-57da-474e-a9ef-c61a56809bc9)
- 261 Information provided by the Local Government Association. See Local Government Association, written evidence.
- 262 Nina Murray, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 263 Heather Bolton, fourth oral evidence session, 15 November 2016.
- 264 Jonathan, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 265 Steve Symonds, first oral evidence session, 25 October 2016.
- 266 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 267 Kolbassia, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.
- 268 Still Human Still Here, written evidence.
- 269 Stephen Hale, second oral evidence session, 1 November 2016.
- 270 Kolbassia, third oral evidence session, 7 November 2016.



Registered Charity no. 1014576