

Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Regional Integration Strategy 2003-2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This strategy has been compiled and prepared by Liz Westmorland, Regional Refugee and Asylum Services Manager, Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium, building on work undertaken around the region, particularly the Sheffield integration strategy, the national strategy expressed in "Full and Equal Citizens" and the local authority asylum teams. Production and launch of this strategy has been guided by a steering group comprising Dr Rob Warm (Yorkshire and Humber Assembly), David Hey (Government Office for the Region); Alistair Griggs and Katherine Blaker (Refugee Council), Alan Matthews (Yorkshire Forward) and Liz Westmorland (Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium).

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Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for asylum seekers and refugees Regional Integration Strategy 2003-2006



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FOREWORD

Yorkshire and Humber has a long and proud tradition of providing a warm welcome and safe homes to people who have fled war and persecution. Generations of settlers have chosen to make their homes in our region and have contributed enormously to our economic, social and cultural life - from Jewish settlers at the turn of the century through to more recent arrivals from places as diverse as Kosovo, Somalia and Iraq.

Therefore, we are delighted to introduce this, the region's first Refugee Integration Strategy. It sets out the region's continuing shared commitment to provide safe and welcoming communities for refugees. It also establishes a new framework for local level activity, which will make sure we are all working to provide fair and equal access to services and opportunities within the region.

This strategy addresses the needs of people who have a right to remain in the UK and who will, we hope, choose to make their new homes in our region. The strategy will help them enter the workforce and build new lives for themselves and their families. It will also benefit Yorkshire and Humber as a whole - recognising and using their skills and experience to benefit the whole of the region.

By encouraging those who have permission to remain in this country to choose to live and work in Yorkshire and Humber, the strategy recognises the wider benefits of welcoming new refugees into our communities. This will help us to achieve our vision of a world-class region for all.

Councillor Peter Box
Chair, Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

Councillor Peter Loosemore
Chair, Regional Reference Group,
Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium
for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION

Background

Yorkshire and Humberside has a long tradition of welcoming and providing safe homes for people who have fled war and persecution around the world. Refugees have settled from a large number of communities, and that has contributed to the vibrant and multi-cultural region that it is today.

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 introduced the policy of dispersing asylum seekers from London and the south east of England to other parts of the country; Yorkshire and Humberside has been supporting dispersed asylum seekers under the 1999 Act since July 2000. There has been a steady increase in numbers dispersed to the region and the total number (with all accommodation providers) was between 10,000 and 11,000 as at April 2003.

Asylum seekers are accommodated in local authorities areas referred to as "cluster areas". In this region the cluster areas are Bradford, Calderdale, Kirkstall, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, Hull and North East Lincolnshire (Grimsby).

Recent Home Office statistics suggest that around 35% of asylum seekers receive permission to stay (positive decisions), with either full refugee status, exceptional leave to remain or humanitarian protection (following the NIA Act of November 2002, the temporary status of exceptional leave to remain was replaced by the status of 'humanitarian protection'). Throughout this document, those who have recently been given permission to stay, are referred to as new refugees. Anecdotally, it appears that over 50% of those with positive decisions are choosing to stay in the dispersal district.

Based on the average length of time for a decision on an asylum case being six months, there could therefore be around 4,000 new refugees in the Yorkshire and Humber Region annually¹. Additionally, in future years, there may be refugees arriving through the Government's settlement programme, although the numbers will not initially be significant². As a result the region will see increasing numbers of new refugees settling in with little or no knowledge of Yorkshire and Humberside, or of British institutions and culture. This problem is further exacerbated for those granted very speedy decisions, who may have had little time to develop language skills and cultural or civic understanding.

Introduction to the Strategy

The strategy has been prepared by partners in the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for asylum seekers and refugees. It follows extensive consultation on a first draft and the incorporation of contributions from the whole range of organisations and individuals involved in the refugee field. See Appendix 1 for addresses of agencies in Yorkshire & Humberside referred to in this document, and Appendix 2 for a list of the organisations and individuals who have contributed to this strategy. The strategy will be further developed into local action plans with refugees and refugee community groups and other key strategic bodies in the region.

¹Home Office statistics, 2nd Quarter 2003

²This rough calculation is based on an approximate 11,000 asylum cases in the region, of whom approximately 35% receive some form of permission to stay. If decision times average six months, in theory up to 7,040 new refugees could settle in the region annually, although the estimate given is more realistic because some will join relatives/friends elsewhere, or go to London. It should be noted that asylum applications and positive decisions have reduced significantly in 2003 following the NIA Act 2002. In addition the expansion of the EU and other Government policy decisions mean that numbers of asylum applications may fluctuate significantly.

³Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill, 2002 - provides for a resettlement programme for refugees being screened by UNHCR prior to coming to the UK. Initially, it will be a programme for approximately 500 refugees annually.

This document is not intended to be a detailed blueprint, rather a guide for the region that can be developed in detail to meet the needs in each cluster area. It will be a living document. It is aimed at strategic partnerships developing community cohesion plans and relevant statutory agencies as well as practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers in both the voluntary and the statutory sectors

The strategy will provide a tool that will showcase indicative practice in the region and which can be used nationally to lobby for resources. It will also provide a framework for the development of local implementation plans.

This strategy aims to identify need and to put mechanisms in place to enable new refugees to integrate into the region and to play a full part in society. It builds on the aims set out in the Home Office strategy 'Full and Equal Citizens - a strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom' and many of the proposals for action are informed by the recommendations from the working groups of the National Refugee Integration Forum.

What is the Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium for asylum seekers and refugees?

The Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium was set up in 2000 by Local Authorities across the region to co-ordinate response to the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999 and the dispersal of asylum seekers to the region, and to act as a conduit between the Home Office (National Asylum Support Service) and the local authorities within the region.

It has three main roles:

- a. To negotiate and manage contracts with the Home Office (National Asylum Support Service) for accommodation and reception of asylum seekers on behalf of 10 local authorities.
- b. To play an "enabling" role in assisting regional stakeholders to develop accessible services for dispersed asylum seekers.
- c. To promote the integration of new refugees into the community and to develop an integration plan for the region as required by the Home Office.

The consortium is served by a team funded by contributions from the local authorities, a grant from National Asylum Support Service and external project funding. The local authority contract management function is carried out by the consortium team, reporting to an executive committee comprising senior local authority officers and Members.

The wider consortium role is a voluntary stakeholder partnership of local authorities and organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sector who provide services or otherwise work with and on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees across the region. These stakeholders come together to share information, to co-ordinate activities and services for asylum seekers and refugees, and to develop joint projects and initiatives.

As well as managing the local authority accommodation contract, the consortium team also assists stakeholders in the region by

- publishing a newsletter and distributing other information through its own website and the multilingual www.refugeeaccess.info
- convening or supporting meetings to help stakeholders share information, identify needs and co-ordinate activities. It also supports specialist multi-agency groups that address specific issues such as accommodation, health, legal matters and community development.

- developing resources needed by the consortium, such as the fundraising specialist currently employed to support the fundraising efforts of all stakeholders

In co-operation with stakeholders, the consortium team is developing processes that will enable the multi-agency bodies gather and share information, identify instances of positive practice, map and prioritise user needs and develop initiatives to meet those needs. Projects may be led by stakeholders, the consortium team, or by partnerships, but these may all be seen as part of the consortium's work in assisting the integration of new refugees.

The Regional Context for this Work

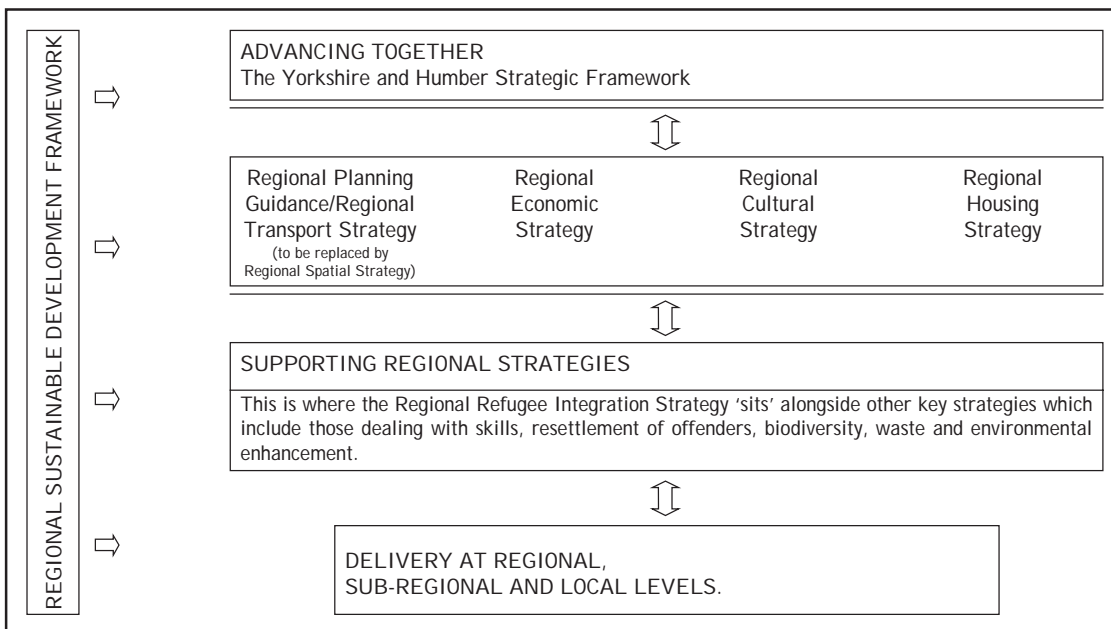
There is a clear benefit to taking a regional approach to issues relating to refugee integration. Work with refugees often involves a range of organisations, working across local boundaries, and therefore ensuring continuity of support is essential to the success of any integration strategy.

The other clear benefit of regional level co-ordination is that it allows 'read across' to other regional strategies - in particular those dealing with housing, skills and the economy. All of these regional strategies fit within the framework provided by Advancing Together - the region's high-level framework. This sets out the region's long-term aspiration for Yorkshire and Humber to be a recognisably world class and international region where the economic, environmental and social well-being of all of the region and its people advances rapidly and sustainably.

To make progress towards this vision, there are six key objectives that we must work together to achieve. They are:

1. An advanced economy
2. Excellent infrastructure
3. High quality environments
4. Educated and skilled people
5. First class quality of life
6. Good governance and civic participation

The six objectives are inter-linked and the region is committed to moving forward on them all. This is what Advancing Together means.



The Refugee Integration Strategy fits within this vision. New settlers will often bring a set of skills and perspectives which can help to support the region's economy, whilst also contributing to the vibrancy and diversity of our communities. More effective integration will also help deliver more cohesive communities by supporting and promoting welcoming and safe communities across our region.

What is Integration?

The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) has agreed a Europe-wide definition of integration that forms the basis of the work to be undertaken in this strategy.

Integration is: "a long-term, two-way process of change that relates to both the conditions for and the actual participation of refugees in all aspects of life of the country of durable asylum as well as to the refugees' own sense of belonging and membership of European societies. The objective of integration programmes and policies should be the establishment of a mutual and responsible relationship between individual refugees, civil society and host states which promotes equality, self-determination and sustainable self-sufficiency and acceptance and positive action in favour of refugees by European governments and societies." Report of the Third European Conference on the Integration of Refugees, Brussels 1999.

This strategy recognises that integration is a process of shared responsibility to provide all individuals with the opportunity to participate equally in society while maintaining a respect for differences. It also recognises that the process of integration should begin from first arrival, hence it is often inappropriate to separate asylum seekers and refugees. However, once granted formal leave to remain, it is essential that new refugees are able to access the full rights and benefits they are entitled to. This document therefore focuses primarily on issues facing refugees, but many of the sections are equally applicable to asylum seekers.

Why Do We Need a Strategy?

The current system for asylum application means that, whatever its shortcomings, there is a structure of monitoring and support by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS) until a final decision is given. Then, within a very short time, new refugees must:

- leave their NASS accommodation and find a new home;
- obtain a National Insurance number;
- register with the correct documents to obtain benefits;
- take responsibility for the moving-in arrangements for their new property;
- arrange, if necessary, for school transfers;
- look for training/employment;
- negotiate and understand the idiosyncrasies of British bureaucracy, institutions and way of life.

In the short term, new refugees need clear routes and support to enable them to access those basic requirements before they can begin the longer process of belonging more fully to our society.

A regional infrastructure to support asylum seekers and refugees already exists, and it must develop in order to address the potential vulnerabilities and contributions of new refugees and to meet the gaps in current provision.

Aims of the Strategy

The key aims of the regional strategy are:

- to encourage individuals who have been granted refugee status, exceptional leave to remain, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to choose to remain in the region;
- to work in partnership to provide high quality services which are responsive to the needs of new refugees;
- to help refugees develop their potential and contribute to the cultural and economic life of the region;
- to raise awareness of refugees as equal members of the community with full rights and responsibilities
- to raise awareness of the positive contribution that new refugees make to the region both culturally and economically
- to counter negative stereotyping and discrimination through raising awareness of the reasons why people seek refuge in this country and the international agreements under which they are recognised and protected;
- to encourage and support the development of refugee community organisations;
- to ensure that the needs of new refugees are integral to all local strategic planning partnerships, and to encourage their active participation;
- to enable new refugees to play a full and equal part in the region;
- to ensure that key agencies in the region, in the voluntary, public and private sectors, and in the faith communities, are aware of the needs of refugees and are able to respond to them;
- to ensure that public agencies meet their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 in their treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

Implementation of the strategy

The strategy aims to provide creative and appropriate ways of assisting refugees to settle in the region.

It recognises that: "refugees are not a homogeneous group, but that there are important class, educational, religious and gender differences that affect individuals' perspectives and interests as well as their ease adjustment."

Good Practice on the Integration of Refugees in the European Union (ECRE: 2000)

A key first step is further consultation with major statutory providers and key stakeholders throughout the region in order to obtain their endorsement and active involvement in implementing the proposals for action.

In each local authority cluster area, the strategy will be developed as a local action plan over a three-year timescale, with the involvement and assistance of local refugees, to meet local need.

It will be implemented through joint working in the local multi-agency groups which bring together a wide range of agencies working with asylum seekers and refugees and will be integrated with the work of the Local Strategic Partnerships.

In some areas this is already well underway, such as in Sheffield where the local integration strategy has been endorsed by all the major players and is now being actively delivered. The local strategies will inform the ongoing development of the regional integration strategy.

Desired Outcomes

- a. Straightforward and supported transition from asylum seeker to refugee.
- b. Contribution to the regeneration of the region by a high percentage of new settlers, and increased employment levels for refugees.
- c. Avoidance of a drift to London and other large cities.
- d. Stable and welcoming communities in all districts of the region.
- e. Refugee inclusion and participation in local and wider communities.
- f. Improved health (including mental health), well-being and self-esteem of refugees.
- g. Better information to guide service planning and service delivery.
- h. Refugees and refugee communities in Yorkshire and Humberside becoming full and equal members of the community, able to meet their needs and fulfill their aspirations through active involvement in all aspects of community life.

Document Layout

The following sections focus on the key strands of integration. They identify:

- Aims
- Gaps in services
- Proposals for action at regional and local level
- Key agencies
- Desired outcomes
- Examples of initiatives already underway in the region

It should be noted that there has been no attempt to objectively evaluate the examples cited nor to offer formal endorsement. Also, they can only provide a snapshot as at mid-2003 of the range of initiatives either in place or being developed across the region.

Stable, inclusive and safe communities will underpin any effective integration planning and the opportunities for refugees to contribute to the region. For that reason, the sections on 'Community Relations/Community Safety' and 'Communications and Media' appear at the beginning of the document. Similarly, consideration must be given in all areas to easing access to all services for women through gender specific provision and childcare/crèche facilities. However, their needs have been highlighted specifically in some of the action plans and, at Appendix 3, there are proposals on how gender issues might be considered throughout the strategy. The other sections appear in alphabetical order.

There is a brief glossary of some of the commonly used terms in the strategy at Appendix 4, and a list of commonly used abbreviations around asylum and refugee issues at Appendix 5.

Language

There is no specific section on language learning and interpreting, although the document makes continual reference to the need for translated documents, English for Speakers of other Language provision and interpreters in order to facilitate access for all refugees to the services they require. The needs of refugees are integral to mainstream provision under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000.

There is a need for more language teaching provision to increase the opportunity for new refugees to gain employment and to move towards greater inclusion⁴.

Proposals for Action and Action Plans

Action plans with more specific targets for regional, sub-regional, local and neighbourhood development of the strategy will be developed after further work on the framework action plans in this document

Monitoring and Review of the Implementation of the Strategy

This strategy document will cover the years 2003-06, and the implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Regional Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in partnership with other key agencies. In order to translate words into action successfully, it will be essential to identify sufficient resources and to develop local implementation plans. Dialogue with key agencies to identify available resources has already begun.

The strategy will be reviewed annually by the Regional Reference Group of the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium. An annual update showing progress in implementing the strategy will be submitted to the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly.

Monitoring of the plans will be undertaken by a steering group comprising representatives from the Consortium, the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, Yorkshire Forward, Government Office for the Region and the Refugee Council. The Steering Group will report to the Regional Reference Group annual review.

⁴Refugees' opportunities and barriers in employment and Training. Dr Alice Bloch. Department For Work & Pensions research report series no. 179. December 2002.

SECTION 2 : COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Positive community relations underpin many of the settlement prospects for refugees. The Police in all parts of the region have taken many positive steps towards ensuring that asylum seekers are given opportunities to integrate safely with communities, and that they are aware of the role of the Police in this country. However there continue to be negative public perceptions of refugees and many racially motivated attacks. Work must continue with host communities to counter negative stereotyping, reduce attacks and to effectively support asylum seekers and refugees.

Aims:

- a. To minimise hate incidents against asylum seekers and refugees through education and prompt and efficient counter measures.
- b. To work for an environment in which refugees can live in their local community free of fear and risk of harassment.
- c. To promote and reinforce the value of refugee involvement in local community groups and the active involvement of refugee community groups.
- d. To enable refugees to work with and contribute to local democratic processes.
- e. To ensure that the needs of refugees are recognised in Community Cohesion Plans.
- f. To provide sensitive and effective support for refugees who have experienced racially motivated acts.

Service Gaps

- The Police, particularly those 'on the ground', are not always aware of the location of new settlements of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Refugees might not be informed of their rights or the civil role of the Police.
- There can be a lack of understanding among refugees and members of the host community of race hate procedures, rights under the Race Relations Act and other civil rights legislation.
- Refugees may have insufficient understanding of how the British Police work and certain aspects of law such as those relating to driving, carrying knives/weapons, age of consent, drugs etc.
- Refugees often have no direct voice in local democratic processes.

Proposals for Action:

At regional/sub regional Level

- a. Develop a method for the dissemination of hate crime statistics, and use the statistics to inform policy decisions on resources and settlement
- b. Provide asylum seekers and refugees with clear information on the role of the Police in this country, and their own rights and responsibilities regarding harassment or race incidents through briefings in the Induction Centre. This should also include an explanation of the legal requirements for driving, the law around drugs, weapons and the age of consent.

At local level

- c. Develop adequate support for communities and individuals for dealing with racially motivated abuse and attacks both in supporting victims and dealing with perpetrators.
- d. Address issues concerning settlement of new refugees in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
- e. Develop mechanisms to pick up early signs of community tensions and effective measures to address them.
- f. Ensure effective liaison between local authority representatives, refugee settlement workers, refugee community organisations and police community safety officers to develop co-ordinated approaches to tackling racial harassment and crime and disorder issues that affect asylum seekers and refugees.
- g. Ensure that all asylum seekers, refugees and refugee community organisations possess an understanding of the legal and social climate in which they live and raise awareness about what constitutes a hate incident.
- h. Establish, and disseminate to asylum seekers and refugees, accommodation providers, refugee community organisations and others, protocols and clear means of reporting incidents to the police and how to access support.
- i. Establish positive relationships with local press and other media to ensure that reporting relating to asylum seekers and refugees is fair, honest and non-provocative.
- j. Include the needs of refugees in drawing up local community plans.
- k. Establish dialogue with local community leaders and communities, including faith communities, on the settlement of new refugees.
- l. Ensure that education providers include the needs of refugee children in inclusion policies, e.g. anti-bullying.
- m. Develop links with local social inclusion initiatives.
- n. Take positive action to include refugees on strategic planning agenda.
- o. Work through schools, the media, trade unions, faith groups and other networks to change public attitudes.
- p. Encourage volunteering that brings together refugees and local community members.
- q. Increase the number of events bringing together refugee communities and host communities in celebrations of cultural diversity.

Key Agencies:

- ***Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships***
- ***Faith Communities***
- ***Housing Providers***
- ***Local Authorities***
- ***Local Strategic Partnerships***

- **Local tenants and residents associations**
- **Police**
- **Race Equality Councils/Networks**
- **Race Hate Crime Reporting Centres**
- **Refugee community organisations**
- **Victim Support**
- **Voluntary Sector Organisations**

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Communities that welcome refugees and the contribution they can make.
- b. Communities in which the potential for social unrest and racial crime is minimised, addressed quickly and effectively.
- c. Communities that have confidence and trust in the processes for dealing with hate incidents.
- d. Suspicion and mistrust of refugees and asylum seekers is reduced.
- e. Refugees have the opportunity to influence how the local community develops, and to be involved in setting agenda.
- f. Increased awareness amongst host communities and refugees of legal and social obligations.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- The Police Forum, co-ordinated by the NASS Regional Manager, meets regularly to share information and to discuss trends and approaches to community policing involving asylum seekers and refugees.
- Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium has developed a media strategy. Immediately following the September 11 attacks, advice was issued to all asylum seekers in the region in the main refugee languages.
- Police attend the regular drop-in centres and visit local reception centres to build up trust and pass information on to asylum seekers.
- Hate incident reporting centres have been established throughout West Yorkshire.

SECTION 3 : COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

The Regional Consortium has an established media strategy that has been in place since 1999. It has been revised and reviewed regularly in the light of experience and events. Good media relations at local level and established protocols for dealing with race incidents or refugee stories, as proposed in the strategy, will enable integration to be effected more smoothly.

Aims

- a. To provide a mechanism for managing both negative and positive stories concerning refugees.

- b. To promote fair and balanced coverage in the media of asylum seekers and refugees.
- c. To promote a positive response to refugees from local communities and to counter harmful myths and stereotyping.

Service Gaps

- Not all the major service providers working with refugees and asylum seekers have developed protocols for dealing with the media in relation to asylum seekers and refugees.
- Few asylum seekers have the skills to communicate with the media directly, and as a result they are usually the passive subjects of reporting. Training for asylum seekers and refugees in communicating with the media needs to be developed.
- Work needs to be undertaken to promote mutual understanding between the media, asylum seekers and their service providers.
- As old myths are debunked, new ones spawn to replace them. 'Myth busting' needs to be undertaken on a regular basis.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Run media training seminars for press officers geared towards the needs of asylum seekers and refugees.
- b. Run media training sessions for refugees and asylum seekers, refugee community organisations and staff from agencies working with refugees.
- c. Regularly address and dispel new myths and inaccuracies about asylum seekers and refugees.
- d. Produce permanent exhibition materials.

At local level

- e. Access local events, make contact and work with schools, trades unions, tenants associations, faith groups and other networks to promote positive images of refugees.
- f. Promote awareness of refugees among local organisations, statutory agencies and the media.
- e. Develop positive relationships with the local press to build trust and minimise negative reporting of asylum seeker and refugee issues
- g. Encourage projects that train and support refugees and local volunteers to talk about refugee issues to a wide range of audiences
- h. Encourage clear political support for refugee integration initiatives.

Key Agencies:

- **Consortium**
- **Local Authorities**
- **Refugee community organisations**
- **Refugee Council**
- **Voluntary Sector**

Examples of initiatives within the region

- The Consortium has a well-established media strategy and a dedicated Press Officer who acts as a central point for the region, ensuring that there is a consistent and coherent response to media stories and that the press is managed proactively.
- A number of seminars have been held in the region to develop protocols between agencies such as Police, local authorities, NASS and local communities.
- The Consortium's press officer is an active participant in the Positive Images Working Group of the National Refugee Integration Forum.
- The Refugee Council's regional press officer is based in the Leeds Office of the Refugee Council. The Refugee Council's press officer and the Consortium press officer work closely together in addressing particular media issues affecting the region.

SECTION 4 : ACCESSING WELFARE BENEFITS

The process for refugees to access welfare benefits once they have been granted HP/Indefinite Leave To Remain can be fraught with administrative delays and complications. Refugees must claim either Job Seeker's Allowance or Income Support, and must obtain a National Insurance Number before they can receive any benefits.

Refugees who can provide sufficient evidence of their status can claim discretionary Interim payments. A claim for a Community Care Grant cannot be made until Income Support or Job Seeker's Allowance has been awarded. Refugees must also claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. Refugees require a NASS 35 letter or other agreed evidence, proving eligibility before they can obtain benefits.

Additionally, those granted Indefinite Leave To Remain can claim backdated Income Support, but claiming it is time-limited so it is crucial that an application is made within 28 days of notification of a positive decision.

There is extensive, up-to-date guidance from the Department for Work & Pensions on these complex issues, but not all local staff are properly briefed and the quality of advice is not consistent, leading to difficulties for some new refugees. Procedures introduced from June 2003 mean that National Insurance Numbers are allocated automatically with new asylum applications, and are activated once leave to remain has been granted.

Aims

- a. To ensure that refugees obtain appropriate welfare support as soon as their NASS support is terminated.
- b. To enable refugees to understand which welfare rights and benefits are available to them.

Service Gaps:

- There have been reports of a very high turnover of benefits staff and its consequent effect on continuity of service. Refugee issues are very complex, and staff require training.

- There may be problems for the Jobcentreplus in confirming the identity of clients. That leads to delays in the issue of the National Insurance Number and a consequent delay in processing the benefit claims. This may be addressed once the new National Insurance Number system starts to take effect.
- On occasions, it seems that the local Jobcentreplus is not kept informed of Government changes in asylum policy, nor provided with up-to-date contacts at the Home Office. For example, in some areas there continues to be confusion over the NASS 35 document officially detailing when NASS support has ended, and whether the Jobcentreplus can make payments if it has not yet arrived. Job Seeker's Allowance will generally pay a client without a NASS 35, whereas Income Support often will not.
- There is a lack of consistency in Home Office letters awarding refugee status. Not all are stamped, and therefore they may not be accepted as valid.
- There is inconsistency in application of benefit rules between different benefit offices.
- Some Jobcentreplus staff have little or no access to interpreters. They rely on the voluntary sector or refugee communities to provide interpreters when clients present to them.
- There is a lack of advice for refugees on form filling.
- There can be confusion over the entitlement of refugees and asylum seekers to volunteer and what expenses they are allowed to receive without this affecting their entitlement to benefits.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that all Jobcentreplus have clear guidance and up-to-date policy information on working with refugees
- b. Jobcentreplus to develop clear policies and procedures on use of interpreters.
- c. Further development of Jobcentreplus staff training/inter-agency training on benefit entitlements

At local level

- d. Establish protocols between local Jobcentreplus offices and accommodation providers to ensure that all successful asylum seekers receive timely and competent advice.
- e. Produce a flow chart on procedures available both to service providers and to the client group in order to avoid confusion and delay.
- f. Jobcentreplus to identify a lead officer in each Local Authority area to work with refugees and be responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the needs and entitlements of new refugees.
- g. Involve Jobcentreplus representatives in multi-agency meetings.
- h. Work with refugee community organisations to ensure that they are aware of the entitlements of new refugees.
- i. Ensure that refugees are aware of benefits information available through the Refugee Access Website, and that move-on information is available on the website.

Key Agencies:

- *Citizens Advice Bureaux and other quality assured advice providers*
- *Community Legal Service Asylum Forum*
- *Community Legal Service Partnerships*
- *Department For Work and Pensions/Jobcentreplus*
- *Home Office*
- *Housing Providers*
- *Local Authority*
- *Refugee Access Project*
- *Refugee Council*
- *Registered Social Landlords dedicated advisors*

Desired Outcomes

- a. New refugees are aware of their entitlements and means of accessing them immediately on receipt of leave to remain.
- b. Staff in all Jobcentreplus offices are fully aware of the rights and entitlements of new refugees and the documents required to evidence their status.
- c. Refugees are provided with clear, accurate and sensitive advice when claiming benefits.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- Department for Work and Pensions Leeds North held an event for organisations working with refugees to cover issues around making Benefit Claims, applications for National Insurance Numbers and Social Fund, and information on New Deal. A full information pack was prepared for all participants.
- Refugee Council: 'Information for Advisors Yorkshire and Humberside. A short Refugee Council Guide - June 2002'. Downloadable from the Refugee Council's website www.refugeecouncil.org.uk. The website also includes a letter for clients to give to Jobcentreplus staff to send off to NASS, requesting that a NASS 35 form be sent to the applicant's home address and a letter explaining to Jobcentreplus staff why the client has come to their office.
- Refugee Access Project: regional website directory translated into main refugee languages (www.refugeeaccess.info). This includes full and up to date guidance on welfare rights and benefits.

SECTION 5 : COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Giving refugees the opportunity to express themselves and represent the needs and aspirations of their own communities is a key part of the integration strategy. Refugee community organisations need to be recognised as crucially important service providers that meet a whole range of community needs. For that reason, building the capacity and sustainability of existing refugee community organisations, as well as assisting the establishment of new organisations, is central to the strategy for the region.

Faith communities, local community groups and centres also have an important role. Initiatives that welcome and involve refugees alongside local people are to be encouraged. Networks and projects that bring refugees and local people together will be strengthened as part of this. Community development models show that initiatives taken at local level through organisations run by and for the communities can offer guidance to larger service providers.

Aims:

- a. To ensure that there are processes in place to enable and support refugees to contribute to decision making on issues that affect them.
- b. To recognise the expertise and experience of refugees and empower them to use their own resources and skills to develop self-help organisations and represent the interests of their community to service providers and decision makers.
- c. To promote and reinforce the importance of working in partnership with refugee community organisations, recognising that they are key organisations with valuable expertise and knowledge of refugee communities and their needs.
- d. To support the development of refugee-led initiatives.
- e. To encourage initiatives by host community groups that include and involve refugees, and initiatives that bring together members of different communities.

Service Gaps:

- Refugee community organisations are in the main run by volunteer staff, who might well themselves still be asylum seekers, with very few resources. They are therefore extremely vulnerable, and rely on short-term funding or one-off grants. They need assistance in building capacity and stabilising themselves.
- It is often very difficult to find affordable premises from which to operate an office or drop-in service.
- Throughout the region a number of different organisations have secured funding to deliver community development initiatives, but there is a risk that maximum impact will not be achieved unless activity is properly co-ordinated.
- Mainstream community development initiatives and capacity-building organizations such as Councils for Voluntary Services may not be fully accessible to refugee communities.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Develop further the regional community development workers' network by active involvement of refugees and participation in research, mapping processes and needs analysis as appropriate to develop a strategy informed directly by refugee communities and to promote effective community development at local levels. The network enables practitioners working with asylum seekers and refugees from across the region to network, and shares and disseminates good practice.
- b. Provide training for decision makers on community development and the benefits of community development approaches.
- c. Through joint working, increase the availability of training focusing on working with refugee and asylum seeking communities, for mainstream community development workers and others.

- d. Encourage research informed by the self-identified needs of refugees.
- e. Work towards meeting both the immediate and long term needs of refugee community organisations in order to create a strong, sustainable and independent refugee community organisation sector across the region.
- f. Hold regular regional events for refugee community organisations to develop strategy and ensure that there is an effective mechanism for that to be fed into the wider integration agenda.
- g. Ensure the sustainability of the Refugee Access Project, which provides an online directory of regional resources and refugee community organisations. Develop local directories in hard copy.
- h. Utilise the Standing Conference for Community Development (SCCD) Framework and the Community Development Foundation materials as a tool to analyse current contexts and practice.

At local level

- i. Promote good practice and the development of community initiatives involving refugees, asylum seekers and others as volunteers, including the provision of training on managing and supporting volunteers.
- j. Work with local strategic partnerships⁵ and other agencies to ensure that refugee communities are included in the decision making processes and developments of regeneration and renewal programmes.
- k. Work with refugee community organisations to support them to work in partnership with appropriate regional and local black and minority ethnic agencies.
- l. Work alongside women to identify their needs and the needs of their communities and work towards meeting these needs through the methods identified above⁶.
- m. Work to identify sources of funding for refugee community organisations so that they can provide sustained support to asylum seekers and refugees.

Key Agencies:

- ***Black and Minority Ethnic Network***
- ***Consortium***
- ***Local Authorities***
- ***Local Voluntary Action/Council for Service***
- ***Local Strategic Partnership Community Empowerment Networks***
- ***Neighbourhood Renewal Teams***
- ***Faith Communities***
- ***Northern Refugee Centre***
- ***Refugee Action***
- ***Refugee community organisations***

⁵Key ones identified are: Crime and Disorder Partnerships; BME Regional Network; Regional Forum; New Deal for Communities; Single Regeneration Budgets; Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan; Local Strategic Partnerships; Health Action Zones; Education Action Zones; Community Legal Service Partnerships; Neighbourhood Renewal Pathfinder schemes; Yorkshire and the Humber Assembly, Government Office, Yorkshire Forward.

⁶See also Appendix 3.

- **Refugee Council**
- **Regional Forum for Voluntary and Community Organisations**
- **Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Sector Partnership**

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Empowerment of refugees to use their own resources and skills to help each other.
- b. The voices and needs of refugees recognised and heard in appropriate strategic planning partnerships and addressed in policy provision.
- c. Increased confidence of refugees as a step towards their greater participation in local communities.
- d. An increase in the skills, knowledge, experience and employability of refugees.
- e. The cultural and social needs of refugees met.
- f. Research that is appropriate, useful and informed by refugee communities.
- g. An increase in the activities of local communities to welcome and include refugees and asylum seekers.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- The Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Sector Partnership, a network of refugee voluntary and community organisations, holds a seat on the Regional Reference Group, with a further two for direct representatives of refugee community organisations, in order to represent the voluntary refugee sector within the Consortium.
- Partners in the Consortium have set up a community development network for workers in the voluntary and statutory sector working with asylum seekers and refugees, who have a community development remit. It aims to circulate and share information and good practice initiatives, access funding and keep up-to-date with new developments. It will also invite mainstream community development representatives, both regional and local, to look at respective roles and to encourage partnership working and better communication and co-ordination.
- In South Yorkshire the Northern Refugee Centre has a community development worker who supports refugee community organisations to establish. They have also supported the development of a forum for all refugee community organisations in the area. This gives groups the chance to share experiences and ideas and allows them to work towards forming a common voice on strategic issues so as to be able to lobby for the needs of their communities at a strategic level.
- The Refugee Council employs a Regional Development Team Advisor. The post aims to promote the development of policy and services in the region to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and to build capacity within the refugee and voluntary sectors, and to promote good practice amongst organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers.
- Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network has a volunteer development co-ordinator who is currently working with several refugee community organisations at the initial stages of formation, running an allotments project and supporting a refugee women's group.
- Safe Haven Yorkshire appointed three Community Development Workers (September 2002-03) funded by the ERF for a 12 month Community Housing and Inclusion Project

(CHIP), based in Humberside, South and West Yorkshire. These workers contributed significantly to locally specific 'move-on' information booklets for new refugees in Sheffield, Rotherham, Leeds, Hull and Wakefield.

- Wakefield has recruited a community development worker under their ERF-funded Refugee Integration Project. The worker has helped to develop community groups and facilitates a weekly drop-in.
- A funding and development officer works within the Consortium Team to research and disseminate information about funding opportunities, to advise local authorities, voluntary and refugee community organisations on funding bids, and to liaise with funding bodies.
- Doncaster Service Centre was set up in summer 2001 by the Doncaster Asylum Team in partnership with other local service providers and has become a springboard for the development of local refugee community organisations. It has supported the establishment of a Turkish-speaking Committee, a Turkish/Kurdish-speaking Committee, a Kosova Committee, an Albanian and an Iranian Committee.

SECTION 6 : CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

As well as giving asylum seekers constructive and fulfilling activities to engage in while they are awaiting the outcome of their asylum claim, leisure activities can help break down barriers through facilitating shared experiences, developing basic English skills and can thereby greatly assist integration into the wider community and contribute to the health and well-being of refugees.

Aims:

- a. To achieve equality of access to a diverse range of leisure services.
- b. To encourage culturally-specific events.
- c. To develop social cohesion and citizenship through shared learning, celebration and articulation of cultures of origin

Service Gaps

- While asylum seekers are awaiting a decision on their asylum case, they are denied many opportunities for leisure through their financial and lingual isolation. This contributes to deterioration in their mental well-being, and to problems with integration, and needs to be addressed while people are still awaiting the outcome of their asylum claim.
- Black and ethnic minorities are often under-represented as users of many leisure activities, including recreational facilities and libraries.
- There can be a gap between the world of culture and that of refugees in areas where there is no history of the two working together

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Organise regional information events to promote the link between cultural and leisure activities and health and well being and the opportunities available for local involvement in such activity.

At local level

- b. Consult with asylum seekers and refugees on their leisure needs and develop ethnic-/gender-/age-specific activities as required.
- c. Encourage and support refugee community organisations to include sports and cultural activities in their work.
- d. Provide information on specific leisure activities with the information given to new refugees when they move out of NASS support, and on the Refugee Access website - www.refugeeaccess.info.
- e. Explore funding opportunities to develop leisure activities for asylum seekers and refugees.
- f. Encourage self-sufficient projects and the recruitment of refugee volunteers in leisure activities alongside local people.
- g. Ensure that asylum seekers, refugees and refugee community organisations are aware of the leisure opportunities and programmes available.

Key Agencies

- *Accommodation providers*
- *Arts Council*
- *Local Authorities*
- *Sport England*
- *Voluntary Sector providers*

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Improved links and communication with local communities.
- b. Improved sense of well-being and 'belonging' for asylum seekers and refugees.
- c. Greater opportunity to learn British language and culture through social activities.
- d. Opportunities for host and refugee communities to meet and increased awareness and understanding each others' cultures.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- Most local authorities and/or their partners have made successful bids to the Home Office Summer Measures Fund to deliver purposeful activities for asylum seekers which could be used as a basis for developing culturally-specific leisure activities for refugees.
- In Barnsley, Barnardo's has obtained funding to employ a worker to establish play sessions for asylum seeker and refugee children in a number of locations.
- Calderdale Asylum Seeker Supporters (CASS) are developing a bicycle loan scheme and cycle proficiency courses supported by Halifax Police and Calderdale Asylum Team.
- Doncaster Asylum Support Team obtained funding to enable women and children to attend swimming classes, purchase swimming costumes and buy refreshments which enhances the social aspects of the activity.

SECTION 7 : EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ADULT

It is widely accepted that refugees need to acquire a certain degree of language proficiency in order to access available services and to make progress in their new life in Britain. Learning can begin as soon as they are dispersed to the region. Analysis of local employment markets may show where there is a need for specific vocational courses geared towards meeting local skill shortages, and practical courses to enable refugees to move more easily into the job market.

Aims:

- a. To provide sufficient capacity and types of training (including vocational training) to enable adult refugees to fulfill their potential and enhance their professional and personal development.
- b. To enable refugees access their welfare rights, employment, leisure and cultural needs themselves

Service Gaps

- More English language provision is needed, including more intensive and frequent courses, as many currently only cater for 6-8 hours per week. There is also a need to provide English as an Additional Language classes tailored to the specific professionals represented in the refugee populations.
- In most locations, English as an Additional Language provision is currently organised around a termly timetable, with no classes over the summer period. That means that there are significant periods of the year when refugees cannot gain access to classes.
- There is a need for more childcare resources, and for the problem to be addressed creatively. Some women might not wish to leave their children with carers.
- There is a need to work with local further education providers to provide regular citizenship courses to meet the needs of those with refugee status.
- There is a need to work with local higher education providers to promote more flexible attitude to fees and bursaries.
- Clear guidance is needed over where to go for advice about further and higher education courses and their costs.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Raise awareness with training providers.
- b. Identify training needs for refugees, particularly English for Speakers of other Languages, computer skills, customised and vocational training, interview skills and work culture.
- c. Encourage more training of English for Speakers of other Languages teachers and workplace based English language teaching.

At local level

- d. Provide targeted training and support, e.g. for women or those with family responsibilities and disabled people.

- e. Encourage joint projects between training providers and employers for training and work placements.
- f. Encourage organisations with refugee volunteers to provide training to those volunteers, and explore the possibilities of national accreditation of such training, eg Open College Network accreditation.
- g. Work with refugee community organisations to support the development of community based learning programmes.

Key Agencies

- **Association of Colleges**
- **Colleges of Further Education**
- **Connexions**
- **Jobcentreplus**
- **Learning and Skills Council**
- **Local Education Authorities**
- **Refugee Training and Advisory Service**
- **Voluntary Sector providers of education and training**
- **Yorkshire Universities**
- **Yorkshire Forum**

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Increase in service provision.
- b. Enhanced job opportunities for refugees in all sectors of employment, but in particular in work areas matching former experience, training and skills.
- c. Improved health and self-esteem of refugees.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- The Advice Information Multicultural Service (A.I.M.S.) in Doncaster is a partnership between Doncaster College, The Department for Work and Pensions, Northern Refugee Centre and Doncaster Council. It provides information and guidance to asylum seekers and refugees in relation to education and employment.
- The Consortium and partner agencies made a successful bid to the Home Office Challenge Fund to establish a Citizenship course for refugees in the region. The course has been awarded Open College Accreditation and is now being delivered across the region. It is hoped that the course will be 'mainstreamed' within colleges after the two years of the project.
- Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network runs an English at home scheme providing tuition to people who cannot attend mainstream classes owing to health problems, care responsibilities or gender-related constraints. Most learners are women with childcare responsibilities.
- In Wakefield, the Refugee Integration Project, funded by the European Refugee Fund, provides a mother and baby class combining adult education with childcare and transport and accessible English language classes for adult refugees in the Wakefield District.

SECTION 8 : EDUCATION AND TRAINING: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The education of asylum seeker and refugee children is vital to the integration of families; experience suggests that for many refugee families the first step towards feeling accepted in their new communities comes through the common interests of schools. All the local authority asylum teams have worked closely with education colleagues to establish protocols to ensure that children are placed promptly in schools.

Aims:

- a. To provide an education for all asylum seeker and refugee children in a culturally appropriate, welcoming and supportive environment, free from racism.
- b. To encourage and recognise the benefits of multicultural education.
- c. To eliminate discrimination and maximise equal opportunity.
- d. To encourage the involvement of asylum seekers and refugee parents in school activities.
- e. To include asylum seeker and refugee issues in the curriculum.
- f. To encourage schools to take a lead and become focal points for integration.

Service Gaps

- In some areas, there is pressure on school places for certain age groups, and there is particular concern regarding the 14-19 age group. If a child arrives at Year 10/11, schools often do not have the resources to meet their needs fully.
- Major difficulties occur when families receive positive asylum decisions and are required to move from their Home Office accommodation. It often occurs when children have just begun to settle into schools and it seriously affects the continuity of their education, as well as reducing the effectiveness of the resources the school has put in.
- Housing in inappropriate areas leading to isolation and difficulties accessing educational resources.
- There is a need to develop provision of 'mother tongue' classes for refugee children who wish to learn or retain their own language.
- Some asylum seekers are qualified teachers whose skills are under-utilised.
- There is insufficient bi-lingual support and translated material.
- Lack of multi-cultural awareness in schools and a need for training and support for schools staff in the needs of refugee children.
- Lack of inclusion of refugee issues in the curriculum.
- Lack of access to suitable school meals.
- Schools may have difficulty in involving and informing parents of school activities.
- Refugee children are under-represented in most forms of early years provision due to a variety of factors including housing mobility, lack of local knowledge, cultural factors, inaccessibility and unwelcoming services.

Proposals for Action:

At regional/sub regional level

- a. Extend the Regional Education Forum to include representatives of training providers, careers advisory services and Connexions, and include sharing of good practice.

- b. Ensure teachers have access to existing resource materials and develop further training on refugee issues.

At local level

- c. Develop links with Connexions and Surestart in each district.
- d. Involve non-LEA schools.
- e. Consider ways in which schools can use refugee volunteers to provide bi-lingual support as a means of helping both the school and the refugees.
- f. Investigate and develop funding opportunities for 'mother tongue' classes.
- g. Provide translated information pack about the school and education system for refugee families.
- h. Monitor and evaluate the educational and social progress of asylum seeker and refugee children.
- i. Access curriculum guidance and work to include refugee issues and the causes of refugee movement in education programmes such as citizenship.
- j. Welcome and encourage the involvement of refugee parents in their child's education, school activities, PTAs, etc.
- k. Develop home-school liaison services.
- l. Provide information on early years provision in key community languages.
- m. Ensure that key professionals involved with refugees are aware of childcare options and support, and how to access this information.
- n. Education Authorities should identify which officer has specific responsibility for the education of refugee children and for their support in schools.

Key Agencies

- *Children's Fund*
- *Connexions*
- *Consortium*
- *Development Education Centres*
- *Further Education Colleges*
- *Learning and Skills Council*
- *Local Authorities*
- *Local Education Authorities*
- *Refugee Council Children's Panel*
- *Schools*
- *Surestart*
- *Voluntary Sector Providers*

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Smoother, quicker integration of refugee families into their locality, led by their children's acceptance in the school or college and rapid acquisition of English.

- b. Greater social inclusion of young adult refugees, leading to improved community integration.
- c. Enhanced opportunities for adults to contribute through voluntary assistance in schools.
- d. Recognition of the contribution refugee children can make to multi-cultural communities.

Examples of initiatives within the region:

- The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) of Sheffield City Council Education Directorate has published 'Guidelines for Refugee Children' to provide guidance and support to schools in meeting the needs of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Rotherham Council has developed a special education unit for all new arrivals to attend before transferring to mainstream schools.
- Barnardo's has obtained funding for two workers to provide literature and art lessons to children aged 5- 12 at the Induction Centre in Leeds in order to assist their education prior to obtaining a school place.
- Branshorne Women's Centre in Hull have home school liaison workers for refugee children and families.
- The Refugee Education Employment Project, a voluntary sector organisation in Sheffield, has assisted a number of refugee teachers into retraining.
- The Refugee Integration Project in Wakefield (ERF-funded) provides an educational psychologist and non-teaching assistant support to refugee children in schools.

SECTION 9 : EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

Research indicates that unemployment rates for refugees are far higher than for the indigenous population, and that many refugees who are working are not in jobs that match their skills or experience.

Aims:

- a. To enable refugees to increase their knowledge and skills through opportunities which can provide support and guidance on obtaining satisfying, longer term employment.
- b. To attain inclusion, and acceptance of the value of refugees in the workplace.
- c. To provide access to sustainable jobs that meet the aspirations and potential of refugees.
- d. To improve rates of refugee employment so as to be comparable with the rest of the local population.
- e. To enable refugee professionals to enter the regional workforce in occupations fitted to their qualifications, training and experience.

Service Gaps

- There is generally insufficient support or co-ordination of support schemes for move into employment, and refugees may be unaware of the options open to them. Many take menial jobs when they have a variety of skills.
- There is no comprehensive programme of auditing the skills and experiences of refugees, and no regional programme aimed at making employers aware of such skills and experiences.
- Refugees need to obtain guidance on their eligibility for employment programmes such as New Deal.
- If refugees are in employment and do not qualify for Housing Benefit, they may not be able to afford supported tenancies.
- Refugees might need to access support when first in work, especially regarding employee rights, health and safety, etc.
- While some refugees and asylum seekers do volunteer within their communities and with refugee agencies, only a few go on to volunteer in agencies outside the refugee sector.

Proposals for Action (see also points under Education and Training: Adults)

At regional level

- a. Recognise and incorporate the potential contribution of new refugees in the design and delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and related programmes.
- b. Establish a quarterly regional forum to share information and monitor development of employment strategies for refugees.
- c. Provide information and guidance to employers regarding the employment of refugees.
- d. Provide training/briefing for staff in mainstream services on refugee issues.
- e. Access validation for overseas qualifications.

At local level

- f. Identify local skills shortages.
- g. Develop programmes to audit the skills, qualifications and work experience of new refugees and to provide careers guidance.
- h. Establish a local employment and volunteering strategy group to include refugees, employment agency, local employers, Jobcentreplus, Connexions, adult education providers, trades unions, and the voluntary sector and develop links to existing local initiatives for black and minority ethnic groups.
- i. Identify specific local employment barriers, and develop programmes to overcome them.
- j. Provide information to employers on the skills and experience available in refugee communities.

- k. Identify and promote volunteering/work placement/shadowing/mentoring schemes both in the refugee sector and in other agencies.
- l. Support the development of peer group mentors and language support within the workplace
- m. Support the development of good practice in volunteering both within the refugee sector and beyond through the identification and provision of training and support for voluntary organisations on recruiting and managing volunteers.
- n. Provide information and guidance on applying for employment, including interview skills, completing application forms and equal opportunities policies.
- o. Ensure effective representation of refugee issues on Local Strategic Partnerships.
- p. Encourage volunteering by members of host communities in refugee organisations that supports and welcomes refugees.

Key Agencies:

- *Connexions*
- *Employment Agency*
- *Jobcentre plus*
- *Learning and Skills Council*
- *Regional Language Network*
- *Trades Union Council*
- *Voluntary Action/Councils for Voluntary Service*
- *Volunteer Bureaux*
- *Y&H Regional Forum*
- *Yorkshire Forward*

Desired Outcomes:

- a. An increase in the self-esteem and confidence of refugees.
- b. Greater contributions to the economic wealth of the region from refugees; less dependency on state benefits.
- c. Opportunities for skills and labour shortages to be addressed.
- d. Greater involvement of employers, trades unions and professional networks in refugee issues, enhancing the positive integration of refugees into the community.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- There is currently a shortage of skilled drivers in the road transport industry, and a large number of refugees who have worked as drivers in their native country. The Nationwide Ethnic Transport Training organisation (NETT), based in Sheffield aims to develop a training project to include refugees and get them into employment in the road transport industry.
- In Kirklees, an Education and Training multi-agency group has been established in order to develop new initiatives to assist people into employment. A Student Development Officer has been recruited through a partnership of Kirklees Asylum Support Service, Huddersfield Technical College and Kirklees Refugees And Friends Together (KRAFT).

- The Connexions service, providing careers and lifestyle advice to 13-19 year olds in Sheffield, has appointed a dedicated refugee co-ordinator.
- Voluntary Action Calderdale has secured funding over three years for a volunteer development programme for ethnic minority communities, from September 2002. The two development workers are based at Voluntary Action Calderdale and run outreach services across Calderdale.
- The Consortium has developed a personal portfolio for asylum seekers and refugees that contains sleeves to insert information on personal contacts, previous education and employment, aspirations, courses and work undertaken in the UK, basic health screening and GP/Dentist information, model CV, model references, etc. This is available to download from www.refugeeaccess.info.
- In Wakefield, the Refugee Integration Project funded by the European Refugee Fund, provides a dedicated employment worker to help refugees to find work or work-related training.
- Sheffield College is part of the EQUAL/ASSET-UK project with the Refugee Council and other partners, providing training for asylum seekers and refugees.
- In Hull, an ethnic minorities consultative working group has been set up to promote and understand issues affecting the Black and Minority Ethnic sector (including asylum seekers and refugees) and to help people access training and employment opportunities.
- There is extensive use of volunteers, including refugees, by the Refugee Council and other voluntary refugee organisations.

SECTION 10 : HEALTH

Newly-arrived asylum seekers should all be registered with a GP and should obtain basic health screening on arrival in their cluster area. However, it is also important that they should notify their health provider if they move away from their address on receiving a positive decision, and that they register from their new home.

Studies suggest that 17% of refugees have physical health problems severe enough to affect their life while 66% have experienced significant anxiety or depression. That compares with 13% of UK males and 15% of females (for physical health problems) and 3% of males, 7% of females treated for depression⁷.

Asylum seekers with special needs (physical and mental health) require additional services that are accessed following an assessment by Social Services Departments under the 1993 NHS and Community Care Act and are then supported by the relevant local authority Social Service. It potentially places a large additional burden on local authority Social Service budgets in the longer term, as those with positive decisions are likely to stay in the district where support is in place.

⁷Asylum Seekers: meeting their health needs. BMA, October 2002

Whilst concentrations of asylum seekers have placed some local health services under strain, it has been estimated that approximately 10% of refugees have had some form of medical training. Innovative ways of using refugees with those skills to ease the strains in the health service need to be considered.

Aims:

- a. To ensure that all new refugees have knowledge of, and direct access to, primary and secondary health care services on an equitable basis.
- b. To meet the health need of refugees as far as possible through mainstream services, whilst developing capacity to meet language and cultural needs.
- c. To increase the provision of specialist mental health and counselling services for victims of torture, with a view to the integration of clients into mainstream services.
- d. To support any refugees with skills relevant to health service delivery to obtain work in the NHS.
- e. To develop within the region, services, refugee community organisations and networks which can address issues such as poor housing, poverty, personal safety and racial harassment which contribute to isolation and impact on physical and mental well-being.

Service gaps:

- Asylum seekers need information and guidance on how the NHS works, such as appointment systems, waiting lists and prescriptions, as many have experience of different health systems. This information needs to be made available on arrival.
- Multi-lingual consultations take longer than others, which puts pressure on waiting times and resources. Some GPs are still reluctant to book interpreters or to take asylum seekers on to their lists.
- Healthcare staff may need more training in the effective use of interpreting services for multi-lingual consultations.
- Interpreters need support, training and supervision, particularly as many are self-employed. Services using interpreters need to be aware of the problems and issues that can arise for interpreters in coping with disclosures made by refugees during a consultation.
- There is a problem of a high turnover of clients. In some areas, the GP patient list has a 60% turnover. That means, as is the case with schools, that practices put a lot of resources into patients who move off their books very quickly.
- There is a well-researched link between poverty and ill-health. The limited levels of support given to asylum seekers have health implications.
- There is insufficient provision of dental services, teenage pregnancy and HIV services.
- There are insufficient services for asylum seekers and refugees with special needs. In general, mental health services in particular are very limited. Often, only patients with a recognised mental illness can gain access to services and the significant number with low-level mental health concerns cannot.
- The mental health services available may be inappropriate for asylum seekers and refugees. There are inadequate resources to assist refugees experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder and adjustment to living in a new country.
- There is a need to address the particular health needs of women.

Proposals for Action:

At regional/sub regional level

- a. Regional Directors of Public Health to ensure that the health needs of refugees are addressed in their policy developments and business planning, and to include consideration of more multi-lingual material to ensure that all health services are fully accessible to refugees and asylum seekers.
- b. Provide information to incoming asylum seekers in the Yorkshire and Humberside Induction Centre on health services and means of accessing them.
- c. Support and resource the regional initiative to set up a culturally-sensitive and specialist mental health services for asylum seekers and refugees (The Refugee Support Centre project).
- d. Develop quality assured interpreting services for clients and health professionals, as well as specialist training and support in working with people who have experienced trauma and / or torture, using bi-cultural methods.
- e. Develop accreditation, retraining, employment, work placement and volunteering initiatives for medically-qualified refugees across all health disciplines.
- f. Undertake longitudinal research into the impact of health interventions targeting refugees and asylum seekers to evaluate their effectiveness and inform the review and planning of future services.

At local level

- g. Primary Care Trusts to recognise the health needs of refugees (as part of the wider vulnerable population) and to ensure that local services are available to them.
- h. The specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees should be routinely considered as part of mental health and sexual health strategies, and of Drug Action Teams' work.
- i. Routes for obtaining interpreting services for medical appointments should be agreed and clarified for all medical practitioners.
- j. A needs analysis of appropriate mental health services, support and counselling should be undertaken in each cluster area.
- k. Encourage and support the delivery of services through refugee community organisations which can promote good health and wellbeing amongst refugees.
- l. Work with bilingual liaison workers, health advocacy workers and refugee community organisations [peer health educators recruited from refugee communities] on specific women's issues such as: female genital mutilation; maternity services; family planning; sexual and gynaecological health; breast screening, domestic violence.
- m. Include refugees and refugee community organisations in local delivery of campaigns on national health priorities (such as sexual health, cancer, coronary heart disease, smoking, drugs, alcohol and teenage pregnancies).

- n. Consider the use of alternative mechanisms for delivering traditional healthcare services, for example NHS walk-in centres. This may ease difficulties of accessing services and negate difficulties around the use of appointment systems.

Key Agencies:

- *Department of Health*
- *Patient participatory advisory liaison services*
- *Primary Care Trusts*
- *Refugee community organisations*
- *Regional Public Health Team*
- *Regional Refugee Mental Health Network*
- *Strategic Health Authorities*

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Refugees to be given information on and equality of access to preventative as well as curative services.
- b. Inclusion of refugee issues on the agenda of policy makers and commissioners of health services.
- c. Relevant training on awareness of refugee issues for all health staff.
- d. Improved health and self-esteem of refugees through employment in their field of expertise.
- e. Improved health and well-being of refugees through the development of culturally appropriate services that are user-led and responsive.

Examples of initiatives within the region:

- Seminars have been conducted throughout the region to raise awareness of mental health issues in relation to asylum seekers and refugees, jointly organised by the Consortium Team, Health Authorities, the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture and Yorkshire Refugee Mental Health Network.
- Yorkshire Refugee Mental Health Network is a regional forum for health professionals that meets on a regular basis and provides training and peer support, administered and co-ordinated by the Tuke Centre, York.
- The Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Support Centre is a group of health professionals, counsellors and voluntary agencies that are working to establish a new mental health service in the region. The plan is to raise funds to have a service set up in 2005. The service aims to provide: crisis and long term counselling, group work, to employ interpreters trained to work in mental health settings and act as cultural advisors; and offer outreach and training to other therapeutic services working to support refugees.
- South East Primary Care Trust in Sheffield has a dedicated nurse consultant who works with asylum seekers. She has established a 'walk-in' clinic where asylum seekers are screened and registered with a local GP. A peripatetic clinic for asylum seekers is being established, and it will bring benefits of developing expertise and reducing pressure on GP practices in those neighbourhoods with relatively-high numbers of asylum seekers.

- In Leeds, the North East PCT has recruited an asylum health team of a doctor, nurse, two project workers, a mental health nurse and an administration assistant. It runs surgeries at several locations, including providing initial health assessments and screenings two mornings per week at Hillside Induction Centre. The team also operates drop-in clinics at a number of locations, including and GPs' surgeries.
- Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network has employed a part time counsellor based with the Health Access Team to work with up to 5 clients/week who require long term counselling (over 3 months) and who need an interpreter.
- Barnsley Health Authority has developed a hand-held medical record for its asylum seeker patients.
- In Hull, an NHS 'stop smoking' initiative has been developed for asylum seekers. It involves attendance at a support group, and an 80% success rate is being achieved.
- Action for Children in Conflict has obtained funding to establish a project in Hull to deliver mental health support services to asylum and refugee children through local schools.
- In Kirklees the White House one-stop medical centre provides a centralised resource for all asylum seekers in the district.
- A sexual health and refugees project is being developed between the National Centre for HIV and Sexual Health (based in Sheffield), the Family Planning Association, Yorkshire and Humberside and other Regional Consortia, and Tandem Communications, part-funded by the Department of Health.
- The West Yorkshire Workforce Development Confederation has recruited a project manager for a year to facilitate routes to NHS employment for overseas trained health professionals.
- In Wakefield, the ERF funded Refugee Integration Project has funded a dedicated Health Worker to cover health-related issues for refugees, including access to services, health promotion and healthy lifestyles.

SECTION 11 : HOUSING

On receiving a positive decision (refugee status, humanitarian protection), new refugees and their accommodation providers receive at most 28 days' notice, and usually much less. Refugees sometimes have to move out of their Home Office accommodation and into temporary premises before being offered permanent housing.

The move from dependency to self sufficiency within 28 days can be a traumatic experience for many refugees. For those in emergency accommodation/ induction centres, the period is only 7 days, which hugely increases the difficulties. There are also greater difficulties for single refugees who are not usually granted priority need with local authority housing allocations.

Aims:

- a. To develop procedures in each local authority area for the transition to permanent housing to be based upon the local situation with regard to the private market, the local authority housing register and housing associations.

- b. Wherever possible, to provide options for refugees to remain in the property, or in the locality, if they so wish.
- c. To minimise the use of temporary accommodation for new refugees.
- d. To develop programmes to inform refugees of their rights and obligations in relation to housing and of how to set up arrangements, e.g. for the supply of utilities.
- e. To develop schemes to assist refugees in moving into the private rented housing sector.
- f. To ensure that the housing needs of refugees are included in the housing strategies of each local authority area.
- g. To develop specialist tenancy support for refugees under the Supporting People programme.

Service Gaps

- Even with a 28-day notice period, it is not always possible for refugees to secure appropriate permanent accommodation before being required to move out of NASS accommodation. That can lead to time spent in temporary accommodation that might cause problems with schooling and orientation. The 28-day notice period could be utilised more fully if the Home Office immediately notified the appropriate local authority (and the housing provider) of each positive decision, thereby allowing the authority to offer housing advice and accommodation quickly and pro-actively. The situation is exacerbated by the 7-day notice period for asylum seekers who receive positive decisions while still in emergency accommodation or induction centres.
- There is a need in some localities for the development of a comprehensive local advice service where new refugees can obtain objective advice on all their housing options and on accessing mainstream services. The Home Office-funded One-Stop Service, provided by the Refugee Council in Yorkshire and Humberside from their Leeds office, has never been resourced to meet the need fully. In some areas, there is a range of organisations delivering advice services about move-on and integration, but there is a need for better coordination of these services.
- The bureaucracy involved in accessing council housing can be very daunting.
- Although NASS accommodation providers are required by NASS to have procedures to assist with move-on once a client has been granted Leave To Remain, it is not clear what degree of assistance is required and, in any case, many private provider staff are ill-equipped to provide advice. Local Authority asylum teams are not necessarily resourced to deliver the task for clients of other providers.
- In many areas there is a shortage of large family housing, and it is sometimes very difficult to find housing in the client's area of choice.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Lobby for a greater length of time for new refugees to make arrangements and access move-on accommodation.
- b. Lobby Government for expansion of funding under Supporting People to introduce initiatives for new refugees.

- c. Ensure that the needs of refugees are included in the emerging Regional Housing Strategy

At local level

- d. Include the needs of refugees in broad Local Authority housing strategies, and in specific strategies on Homelessness, Supporting People, as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
- e. Develop local housing strategies to maintain mixed communities as an aid to integration.
- f. Develop translated information packs on the local housing situation, local authority policy on determining priority need and the housing options available to new refugees.
- g. Develop local plans on access to housing allocations.
- h. Provide information and advice to asylum seekers on realistic options for permanent housing once they receive refugee status.
- i. Raise the debate as a part of local housing strategy discussion of priority need, vulnerability and area choices for refugees.
- j. Liaise with housing associations, private providers and private landlords to identify current demand and solutions to housing need.
- k. Develop and sustain both generalist and specialist local tenancy/floating support services for refugees.
- l. Ensure that a local move-on pack is available in the most common refugee languages and linked to existing local service agreements, providing a clear process for move-on.
- m. Develop a number of options as appropriate e.g. bond guarantee schemes, housing associations, temporary hostel accommodation etc. to provide solutions for individuals according to their needs and wishes.

Key Agencies:

- ***Government Office for Yorkshire and Humberside***
- ***Housing Corporation***
- ***Local Authorities***
- ***Local Strategic Partnerships***
- ***Private Landlords***
- ***Private Providers***
- ***Refugee Council***
- ***Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)***
- ***Voluntary Sector housing providers***
- ***Yorkshire and Humber Assembly***
- ***Yorkshire Forward***

Desired Outcomes:

- a. A smooth, managed transition from asylum accommodation to permanent housing.
- b. Reduction in numbers of refugees living in temporary and inappropriate accommodation.
- c. Greater understanding by refugees of the housing market, and greater chance of settlement and integration into the area chosen.
- d. Multi-cultural, diverse and integrated communities.

Examples of initiatives within the region

- Safe Haven provide peripatetic support in Hull to new refugee households moving on from National Asylum Support Service supported accommodation.
- Community Housing and Inclusion Project (CHIP), a one year European Refugee Fund funded project (now completed) led by Safe Haven facilitated access to appropriate housing and related support through a range of referral mechanisms, developed local service directories and promoted self-help models for the development of community organisations.
- Sheffield City Council has established a team to offer support to all vulnerable homeless, but in particular refugees and black and minority ethnic applicants through a "move in" process. The multi-lingual team will: interview statutorily homeless applicants and agree an area of choice; accompany the applicant to the area selected; accompany the applicant to view the property once it is available; assist the area housing staff with the sign-up process ensuring all relevant benefits are claimed; assist through the "move-in" process with utilities, GPs, education and introduce the applicants to local community and support networks.
- Wakefield's Supported Housing Team provide housing options advice, signposting, and furnished, supported housing for refugees, using Supporting People grant.
- The Wakefield Rent Deposit scheme assists refugees to access private sector accommodation.
- Leeds Federated Housing Association runs a scheme called New Roots, aiming to rehouse and integrate refugees into the community. The scheme has a small number of temporary and permanent properties with floating support.

SECTION 12 : REFUGEES RIGHTS: ADVICE, INFORMATION, REPRESENTATION, REFERRAL AND SIGNPOSTING

When asylum seekers receive a positive decision, they have to act promptly to access mainstream services before their NASS accommodation and support are terminated. They are heavily reliant on receiving good-quality, advice on all UK systems, such as housing and welfare benefits. Services are required which can deal with integration issues as well as the initial need for advice on asylum applications. New refugees may also need advice in the areas of:

- immigration matters relating to family reunion
- family tracing
- overseas qualifications
- missing documentation
- travel documents and citizenship applications

Aims:

- a. To ensure that there is accessibility to quality assured and Community Legal Services contracted and trained legal advisors in each cluster area.
- b. To ensure that new refugees can gain access to comprehensive guidance by appropriately registered and accredited advisors in their locality.
- c. To provide sufficient resources for generalist advice in the region.
- d. To raise awareness of refugees' rights and the role of advice agencies.
- e. To develop and guarantee the quality of advice for refugees through the Community Legal Service Quality Mark

Service Gaps

- The situation in parts of the region has on occasions almost reached crisis point, with solicitors unable to take new clients.
- Service provision throughout the region is very ad hoc.
- There is inadequate provision in the region of generalist advice, e.g. through Citizens' Advice Bureaux, independent advice agencies, Local Authorities.
- There is an inadequate supply of interpreters for advice agencies, or of funding to pay for them.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level

- a. Undertake an audit of existing provision, evaluation of needs and development of referral protocols. Plans are underway for the Refugee Council to work with the Legal Services Commission to produce guidelines for Community Legal Service Partnerships on meeting refugee advice needs locally.
- b. Encourage the development of training and support for interpreters to build good practice in interpreting services for refugees and asylum seekers

At local level

- c. Provide free access to internet advice sites, such as the Refugee Access website www.refugeeaccess.info and the linked Community Legal Services www.justask.org.uk website.
- d. Community Legal Service Partnerships should establish protocols and training to ensure efficient use of capacity across a range of providers, including local voluntary organisations and enable refugee community organisations to support their communities.
- e. Build capacity for provision of advice in Connexions Centres and other points of public access.

Key Agencies

- *Citizens' Advice Bureaux and other quality assured advice providers*

- **Community Legal Service Partnerships and their constituent members including:**
 - Home Office and agencies including local NASS teams
 - Legal Services Commission
 - Local Authorities
 - Solicitors
 - Voluntary Sector Organisations
- **Connexions partnerships**
- **Northern Refugee Centre**
- **Refugee Council**

Examples of initiatives within the region

- A Community Legal Services Forum is established for key parties to plan together the provision of legal advice for asylum seekers and refugees in the region.
- The Hull Citizen's Advice Bureau Leo Schultz Project is a generalist advice service and referral point for asylum seekers and refugees based on needs identified by the Hull Community Legal Service Partnerships and funded jointly by the Commission's Partnership Initiative Budget and the local Primary Care Trusts.
- Establishment of a Refugee Legal Centre office in Leeds, with approximately 20 staff.
- Community Legal Services Partnerships in Calderdale and Sheffield are including refugee groups (or groups that represent refugees) on their steering groups.
- The Refugee Access Website, www.refugeeaccess.info includes advice leaflets in translated form and lists addresses of sources of advice.

SECTION 13 : UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)

Prior to February/March 2003 there had been a sharp rise in the number of UASC entering UK ports, primarily in London and Dover with the increase being mirrored by more applications in Yorkshire and Humberside. Pressures in Kent have led to UASCs being placed with subcontractors out-of county while case responsibility remains with Kent. Recent guidance from the Department of Health has affirmed that unaccompanied asylum seeking children (and refugees) should be assessed with a presumption of support under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, unless the young person chooses to be supported under Section 17.

Aims:

- a. To ensure that all young separated refugees have access to full health screening and services and that health workers contribute to initial assessments as required by the national assessment framework laid down by the Department of Health.
- b. To ensure that all young separated refugees have access to further education, training and careers guidance, volunteering opportunities and information.
- c. To support young refugees in, or close to their own community wherever possible.
- d. To assist young people to maintain or restore contact with their family whenever possible.

- e. To ensure that young refugees feel safe in their environment and can grow into confident, responsible adults.

Service Gaps

- Underdeveloped procedures in Local Authorities.
- Shortage of appropriate foster homes and good quality supported accommodation.
- Lack of awareness and training throughout local authorities on this client group.
- Lack of awareness of UASC issues amongst existing advice and support agencies
- Lack of guidance on age assessments and disputes with the consequence that children may be passed from one agency to another because of misinformation.
- Lack of protocols and guidance on support at adulthood (18).
- Contracted support from private agencies and Kent Social Services is patchy and there is a lack of clarity around the services contracted by Kent Social Services to private providers.
- Lack of supervision and guidance on British culture, institutions and procedures, e.g. health.
- Shortage of resources and services to provide emotional and mental health support.
- A dedicated support team for UASC in those areas where numbers are significant and increasing.

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Young refugees will become included members of the community.
- b. Their educational and career aspirations and potential can be met.
- c. When appropriate, a supported return to their country of origin and/or family can be facilitated.

Proposals for Action:

At regional level:

- a. A regional protocol for the care of UASC to be agreed and developed into local practice to include a full needs assessment in line with the national framework for the assessment of children in need in order to support UASC appropriately under Section 20 or Section 17 of the Children Act, 1989.
- b. The training needs for those involved in support for this client group to be identified, and a training/skill sharing programme initiated on a region-wide basis.
- c. Consult with Kent and London boroughs on good practice models and disseminate this information.

At local level:

- a. Agree clear procedures for transition from asylum seeker to refugee, setting out the support and services available to the young people and liaison with accepting authorities if dispersed, to ensure continuity of care and support.

- b. Provide information for GPs on the particular health needs of young refugees, including mental and emotional needs.
- c. Work together with GPs to ensure that all health needs can be effectively incorporated into the social services care plan for the young person.
- d. Develop joint working between asylum teams and social service children's teams.
- e. Actively encourage agencies working with young refugees to attend multi agency forums/meetings.
- f. Care/personal education plans to be in place where appropriate.
- g. Local Connexions services, Further Education colleges and careers guidance agencies to ensure that their own staff are aware of the existence and needs of young refugees in order to help them to gain access to further education or training and receive appropriate support.
- h. The Refugee Council children's panel to be used as a resource for advice and guidance.
- i. Consider schemes for the recruitment of suitable carers for UASC and unaccompanied refugees.
- j. All separated refugees under the age of 16 years should be placed with culturally appropriate carers under Section 20, Children Act, 1989.
- k. Prepare copies of the procedures (translated as necessary) for young refugees, clearly setting out their rights and responsibilities and the support they can expect from local statutory, housing provider and voluntary agencies.
- l. Ensure that local youth agencies, sports and leisure providers are aware of the needs of young refugees when planning their activities and offer services accordingly.
- m. Support and encourage the establishment of community and voluntary organisations that can meet the needs of young refugees. This can be through paid staff and volunteers who can act as befrienders and mentors and run appropriate activities.
- n. Encourage the involvement of young refugees in decision making and local community development initiatives.
- o. Produce a local inter-agency plan to incorporate all elements of support for unaccompanied refugee children.

Key Agencies:

- **Children's Fund**
- **Connexions**
- **Consortium**
- **Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber**
- **Refugee community organisations**
- **Refugee Council Children's Panel**
- **Save the Children**
- **Schools and colleges**

- **Social Service Departments**
- **Youth and Community Services**

Examples of initiatives within the region

- Hull: The Tuke Centre run a mental health resource project for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, placed there by Kent County Council.
- Sheffield has a dedicated social work team and uses dedicated individual carers. Child in Need planning meetings are held within 7 working days of commencement of initial assessments in all cases. Thereafter Review Planning Meetings are convened at a minimum of 12 weekly intervals for all children supported under Section 20, Children Act, 1989.
- Leeds and Wakefield Local Authorities have written protocols for the support of UASC.

APPENDIX 1

Addresses/telephone numbers of organisations referred to in the strategy.

A.I.M.S
Advice Information Multicultural Service
Ground Floor
Doncaster College
Waterdale, Doncaster
DN1 3WX

Telephone: 01302 553893

Barnsley Asylum Support Team
Belmont, Cross Street
Monk Bretton
Barnsley
S71 2DY

Telephone: 01226 284053

Benefits Agency
Hume House
Tower House Street
Leeds
LS2 8NT

Telephone: 0113 214 8390

BME Regional Network
Quest House
243 Manningham Lane
Bradford
BD8 7ER

Telephone: 01274 482323

Bradford Asylum Support Team
Woodview Court
5 Woodend Crescent
Shiplay
BD18 2PA

Telephone: 01274 437434

Calderdale Asylum Seeker Support Team
Social Services Department
PO Box 33
Northgate House
Northgate
Halifax, HX1 1UN

Telephone: 01422 393377

CHIP Project
C/o Safehaven Yorkshire
Raines House
Denby Dale Road
Wakefield
WF1 1HL

Telephone: 01924 380090

Community Legal Services
Harcourt House, Chancellor Court
21 The Calls
Leeds,
LS2 7EH

Telephone: 0113 390 7300

Connexions Humber
24 Priory Tec Park
Saxon Way
Hessle
HU13 9PB

Telephone: 01482 350150

Connexions S. Yorks Ltd
Units 1 & 2 Meadow Court
Amos Road
Sheffield
S9 1BX

Telephone: 0114 261 9393

Connexions W. Yorks
Park View House,
Woodvale Office Park
Woodvale Road,
Brighouse, West Yorkshire
HD6 4AB

Telephone: 01484 727500

Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
Sheffield Education Authority
Bannerdale Centre
Bannerdale Road
Sheffield, S7 2EW

Telephone: 0114 250 6886

Health Access Team for Asylum Seekers
Leeds North East Primary Care Team
Leeds,
LS8

Telephone: 0113 295 2740

Humberside Police
The Avenues Local Policing Station
Prince's Avenue
Hull
HU1 3DJ

Telephone: 01482 326111 extn. 2335

Kirklees Asylum Support Team
Clare House
19 Clare Hill
Huddersfield
HD1 5BS

Telephone: 01484 223444

Doncaster Asylum Support Team
King Mews
64-66 East Laith Gate
Doncaster
DN1 1JD

Telephone: 01302 862039

Government Office for Yorkshire and the
Humber
PO Box 213, City House,
New Station Street,
Leeds,
LS1 4US

Telephone: 0113 283 6449

Hull Asylum and Refugee Team
6 Posterngate
Hull
HU1 2JN

Telephone: 01482 211100

Job Centre Plus
Eastgate Job Centre
35 Eastgate
Leeds
LS2 7RE

Telephone: 0113 215 500

KRAFT (Kirklees Refugees and Friends
Together)
21 Belmont Street
Huddersfield
HD1 5BZ

Telephone: 01484 352 050

Learning & Skills Council Humberside
The Maltings,
Sylvester Square,
Sylvester Street,
Hull, HU1 3HA

Telephone: 01482 383425

Learning & Skills Council West Yorkshire
Mercury House,
4 Manchester Road,
Bradford, BD5 0LQ

Telephone: 01274 444152

Leeds Asylum Support Network (LASSN)
Resource Centre
233 Roundhay Road
2nd Floor
Leeds
LS8 4HS

Telephone: 0113 380 5694

Leeds Asylum Support Team
7th Floor West
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds, LS2 8ET

Telephone: 0113 224 3478

Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau
31 New York Street
Leeds
LS2 7DT

Telephone: 0113 245 7679

National Asylum Support Service
Waterside Court,
Kirkstall Road,
Leeds,
LS4 2QB

Telephone: 0113 386 5710



Northern Refugee Centre
Carver House,
2 Carver Street
Sheffield,
S1 4FS

Telephone: 0114 275 3114

Park Lane College
Park Lane
Leeds
LS3 1AA

Telephone: 0113 216 2190

Refugee Action
Suite 7, Floor C
Joseph Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds LS3 1AB

Telephone: 0113 244 5345

Refugee Council
Ground Floor, Hurlley House
1 Dewsbury Road
Leeds
LS11 5DQ

Telephone: 0113 244 9404

Refugee Education and
Training Advice Service (RETAS)
335 Roundhay Road
Leeds
LS8 4HT

Telephone: 0113 240 7320

Refugee Legal Centre Leeds
5 Butts Court, Leeds
LS1 5JS

Telephone: 0113 245 2819

Regional Education Forum
C/o Regional Asylum Consortium
7th Floor West
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds, LS2 8ET

Telephone: 0113 247 8705

Regional Reference Group
C/o Regional Asylum Consortium
7th Floor West
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds, LS2 8ET

Telephone: 0113 247 5362

Rotherham Asylum Support Team
2 Holywell Place
Rotherham
S65 1HH

Telephone: 01709 838434

Safehaven Yorkshire
Raines House
Denby Dale Road
Wakefield
WF1 1HL

Telephone: 01924 380090

Save The Children England Programme
Yorkshire & Humberside
Development Team
2nd Floor, Eastgate
Leeds LS2 7LY

Telephone: 0113 242 4844

Sheffield Asylum Support
2nd Floor, Howden House
1 Union Street
Sheffield
S1 2SH

Telephone: 0114 273 6612

S.Y. Police
Community Safety Department
Suite 3, Albion House
Savile Street East
Sheffield, S4 7UQ

Telephone: 0114 296 3250

Surestart
Government Office Yorkshire & Humber
City House, PO Box 213
New Station Road
Leeds, LS1 4US

Telephone: 0113 283 5237

Voluntary Action Calderdale
Venture House
1-9 Silver Street
Halifax, Calderdale
HX1 1HS

Telephone: 01422 348777

Volunteering & Asylum Project
C/o Tandem Communications & Research
Email: ruth.wilson@teandem-uk.com

Telephone: 0113 266 9123

W. Y. Police
Laburnam Road,
Wakefield,
WF1 3QP

Telephone: 01924 292150

W. Y. Workforce Network Development
Confederation
Blenheim House, West One,
Duncombe Street,
Leeds
LS1 4PL

Telephone: 0113 295 2151

Wakefield Asylum Seekers and Refugee
Integration Project
Wakefield MDC
Housing and Social Care
Flanshaw Centre, 6 Springfield Grange,
Flanshaw, Wakefield, WF2 9QP

Telephone: 01924 304140

Y & H Assembly
18 King Street,
Wakefield,
WF1 2SQ

Telephone: 01924 331555

Y & H Consortium for
Asylum Seekers and Refugees
6th Floor West,
Merrion House,
110 Merrion Centre,
Leeds, LS2 8ET

Telephone: 0113 247 5259 / 5755

Yorkshire Forward
Victoria House,
2 Victoria Place,
Leeds,
LS11 5AE

Telephone: 0113 394 9613

YHRSP
C/o Bradford Action for Refugees
Unit 2, Carlisle Business Centre
60 Carlisle Road
Bradford
BD8 8BD

Telephone: 01274 223240

Yorkshire and Humberside
Refugee Support Centre
C/o LASSN
Resource Centre
233 Roundhay Road
2nd Floor
Leeds
LS8 4HS

Telephone: 0113 380 5694

APPENDIX 2

Responses to the consultative draft Integration Strategy

The following organisations and individuals responded to the consultative draft strategy. As far as possible, all relevant and appropriate suggestions were incorporated.

Berhanu Kassayie, Praxis, London; Frank Hanley, Policy & Executive Support, Equalities Service, Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council; Kate Traynor, The Children's Society; Jim Steinke, on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Sector Partnership ; Mike Adcock, Crime Reduction Team, Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber; Cliff Williams, Unison and Chair of Regional TUC; Cllr Mark Edgell, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council; Refugee Council, Leeds; Ellen Richardson, Department for Work and Pensions, Leeds North; Joanne Radcliffe, Sheffield Community Homefinders, Sheffield City Council; Celia Cashman, Safehaven Yorkshire; Graham Brownlee, The Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and The Humber; Superintendent Pat Geenty, Humberside Police; Inspector Paul Varley, South Yorkshire Police; John Calvert, The backtoworkcompany, Leeds; Jasper South, Supporting People Manager, Sheffield City Council; Tony Lidington, Bradford; Tim Roberts, Asylum Seekers Policy Manager, Department of Health; Brian Walsh, Asylum Team Manager, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council; Professor Gary Craig, University of Hull; Inspector Charlie Glass, West Yorkshire Police; Kate Smith, Womenspace, Huddersfield; Kirklees Multi Agency Steering Group; Leeds Asylum Support Network; Chris Powell, The Tuke Centre, York; Ian Martin, Community Legal Service, Leeds; Janine Goggins, Connexions West Yorkshire; Neil Hickling, Head of Business Development, Jobcentre Plus, Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Office; Chris Snell, Save the Children England Programme, Yorkshire & Humberside Development Team; Ruth Wilson, on behalf of The Volunteering and Asylum Project; Helen Kendall, Unaccompanied Minors Support Team, Sheffield City Council; Martin Schweiger, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Medical Officer for Environmental Health, Leeds; The Health and Housing (asylum seekers and Refugees) Forum, Yorkshire & Humberside; Jemima Charles, Refugee Education Co-ordinator, Doncaster; Patrick Wintour, Employability Forum; Mayor Martin Winter, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Jim Steinke, Northern Refugee Centre, Sheffield; Katherine Blaker, for the Community development Workers Regional Network; Anne McKillop, Assistant Director (Yorkshire & Humberside), National Asylum Support Service; Asylum seekers and Refugees Education Forum c/o Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium; Val Kay, Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium Team; Kathryn Bramall, Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium Team; Philip Coppard, Chief Executive, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council; Steve Stewart, Assistant Chief Executive, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council; Mike Pearson, Land & Development Manager, Yorkshire Water; Andy Wilson, Chief Executive, North York Moors National Park Authority; David Andrews, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Tourist Board; Mary Wright, Director, External Relations & Development, Arts Council England, Yorkshire; Cllr Keith Wakefield, Leader, Leeds City Council; Dr Rob Warm, Yorkshire and Humber Assembly; Dick Williams, Regional Development Manager, Refugee Council, London; David Gent, Sport England, Yorkshire & Humberside; Dave Sherborne, Transport Policy Section, Leeds Development Department, Leeds City Council; Julie Thomson, Supporting People Manager, Hull City Council.

APPENDIX 3

Including gender issues in the Yorkshire and Humberside Integration Strategy

This appendix has a number of aims. Firstly it suggests actions that need to be undertaken to ensure that issues of gender are consistently considered throughout the strategy and in the development of all services. Secondly it raises many issues that require further thought and discussion regionally and locally in order to reach enduring and practical solutions.

The points below are not in any order of priority

1. Isolation and personal safety issues

- Women are often isolated as their lives may revolve around husbands, children and shopping; while this may be traditional, the lack of friends or relatives close by to provide company and social contact is not.
- Women alone are often frightened to go out, and may not feel able to mix even within their own community (if there is one) if this is not usual for a woman alone.
- For women with little English it is hard to develop social networks, e.g. via the school gates, or by joining clubs or classes.
- Women who dress differently from the host community are more likely to feel (and to be) conspicuous and attract hostility.
- Women may need to be collected from home initially, or be approached by befriending schemes, before they become regular members of women's groups or other activities, so they can get to know the route / transport and the people involved.

2. Developing new services

- Use a gender checklist to assess how accessible new services will be to refugee women (how will information about the services reach them, will they be able to get there with small children, or during school hours, will there be a creche or childcare expenses?).
- Separate out women's needs (as well as 'family' needs) in any needs assessment
- Specifically monitor uptake of services by women.
- Address gender questions in regional and / or local research, mapping and planning regarding refugees.

3. Domestic violence

- Ensure information about UK law and woman's rights regarding domestic violence is available in appropriate languages and located in places that women are likely to see (e.g. GP surgeries, libraries, community centres, nurseries).
- Women's refuges are dependent on housing benefit and social security payments to cover the cost of a woman's stay in the refuge. Ensure provision is available to cover the needs of women refugees and asylum seekers who are not eligible for these benefit payments.

- Provide specialist training on advising refugee women suffering domestic violence for refuge workers, legal advisers, health professionals, police etc.

4. Language and other training needs

- Develop pre-beginners ESOL courses to build up women's self-esteem to enable them to feel confident in accessing formal courses.
- Evaluate the potential for delivering classes at RCO premises, for women who would not want to attend courses at colleges.
- Ensure women-only classes are available, for women who would not be allowed to attend mixed classes.
- Ensure appropriate childcare facilities are available.
- Consider the range of training needs (from illiterate in own language, to highly skilled /experienced professional background) and develop a range of appropriate training to meet those needs.
- Support provision of mother-tongue literacy classes.

5. Childcare

- Ensure women's own choices and preferences are central to provision. Childminders within the woman's own community are often preferred, for communication and cultural reasons; these may not be formalised arrangements or registered childminders.
- Childcare arrangements, whether creche or payments to cover childminder, must be budgeted for in all services to ensure accessibility of services to women.

6. Health

- Women may experience depression due to isolation, separation from children, domestic violence or rape as well as trauma and insecurity about their future and the future for their families. Women's mental health care needs must be provided for with sensitivity relating to language and cultural needs.
- Development of culturally appropriate services to provide for women's sexual healthcare needs.
- Women may face additional difficulties around communication because of language, gender of doctor, gender of interpreter, subject matter (eg rape or sexual violence). These factors must be central to the development of new services.
- Research on women refugees' experiences of life in the UK undertaken by Refugee Action recommends:
 - Increased specialist counselling services in the regions
 - Training for GPs and other health staff
 - Self-help support groups
 - Adequate funds and systems for interpreting and translation services

7. Housing

- Further recommendations from Refugee Action's research:
 - Independent monitoring of quality standards in accommodation, in particular the complaints procedure

- Guaranteed access to a telephone
- Provision of locks on doors to private space and bathroom
- Landlords must ask permission before entering the private space of tenants
- Single sex units and family accommodation to be provided as appropriate
- Provide a stable and supportive environment for women who are pregnant or have just given birth.
- Each woman should be informed of her rights to protection from sexual and racial harassment through translated materials - written or oral.

8. Employment

- Include women separately (from husband or partner who is the principal applicant) in skills analysis.

9. Capacity-building: individuals', women's groups and Refugee community organisations

- Ensure provision of capacity-building support for refugee women's groups.
- Provide assertiveness and public-speaking training for refugee women to empower them to advocate for themselves and their communities.

APPENDIX 4

Glossary of Terms

Accommodation Centres:

Included in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum 2002 bill, they are centres where asylum seekers may be required to reside under the terms of their temporary admission. They will remain until their application is determined, or if in a family group, for no more than 6 months. Two models are being proposed - the first where up to 750 asylum seekers will be housed in a large rural centre and provided with education, health, legal and leisure services on one site, the second a hub and spoke model for smaller numbers, within an urban area and tapping into mainstream services.

Asylum Seeker:

Someone currently seeking asylum or refugee status or humanitarian protection under the 1951 United Nations Convention. If their application is successful they will be allowed to remain in the country where they have claimed asylum.

Citizenship:

British citizenship should embrace positively the diversity of background, culture and faiths that living in modern Britain involves. British citizens should play an active role, both economic and political, in our society, and have a sense of belonging to a wider community. Citizenship brings responsibilities as well as rights . . . new citizens (should) understand and respect the UK culture and its laws. *Source: The Home Secretary, David Blunkett MP. September 2002*

Community Cohesion:

An agenda that seeks to create an environment where people of different backgrounds, interests and abilities can co-exist and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all members of the community.

Community development:

A range of practices dedicated to increasing the strength and effectiveness of community life, improving local conditions, especially for people in disadvantaged situations, and enabling people to participate in public decision-making and to achieve greater long-term control over their circumstances. *Source: Community Development Foundation website*

Community legal service (CLS):

The community legal service is a national initiative established by the Access to Justice Act 1999 and co-ordinated by the Legal Service Commission. It aims to address social exclusion through the provision of quality assured and cost effective advice and information about matters of civil law.

Community legal service partnerships:

Local networks of providers of legal services, supported by co-ordinated funding and delivering services to local communities based on identified need. *Source: <http://www.renewal.net/jargonBuster.asp>.*

Dispersal:

Government policy operated by National Asylum Support Service in which asylum seekers are placed in accommodation outside London and the South East on a no-choice basis.

Exceptional Leave to Enter (ELE) or Exception Leave to Remain (ELR):

An immigration status granted to asylum seekers who do not meet the definition of refugee as defined by the UN Convention but are allowed to remain in the UK for other reason e.g. if it would be dangerous for them to return to their home country (see also Humanitarian Protection).

Hardcase Support: Section 4 Support

Term used for the support made available under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to those who are no longer entitled to Home Office support because they have exhausted their appeal rights. This is fully catered support with no cash allowance in an area of no choice.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR):

Permission to remain in the UK without any time limit.

Induction Centre/Induction Process:

A process introduced to give asylum seekers a basic introduction to and understanding of the asylum process and their rights and responsibilities when they arrive in to this country, and prior to being dispersed. The asylum seekers are provided with fully catered accommodation and are dispersed from the Induction Centre within 7 working days.

Integration:

A multi-dimensional, long term process requiring change in both the host and refugee communities and resulting in equality, acceptance and participation of refugees in society (see page 8 for a fuller definition used as the basis for this strategy).

Jobcentreplus:

The administrative branch of the department of Works & Pensions, which makes benefits payments.

Local Strategic Partnership:

Brings the public, private, community and voluntary sectors together at a local level to work more effectively together to deliver services to the community. Frequently known as LSPs.

Source: <http://www.sccd.org.uk/help/glossary/htm#LSP>

NASS (National Asylum Support Service):

The part of the Home Office responsible for operating the national scheme of asylum support.

NASS 35:

Home Office document covering date and type of leave granted.

Neighbourhood Renewal:

A government vision that within 10-20 years no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. The National Strategy has two long-term goals:

- To deliver economic prosperity, safe communities, high quality schools, decent housing, improved physical environment and better health to the poorest parts of the country
- To narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

New deal:

A government initiative that provides substantial long term funding to some of the poorest communities in the country. It encourages community members to engage in the decision making process on how the resources allocated to regenerate the area are used.

Race Relations Act 1976:

Legislated against discrimination in employment and training, the provision of goods and services, education and housing. It established the Commission for Racial Equality and enabled individuals who had experienced discrimination to bring proceedings and claim damages. *Source: Bridging Communities - Citizens Advice Bureau, March 2002.*

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000:

Amends and extends the 1976 Act. It outlaws discrimination in all functions of public authorities and enforces a general duty on public authorities to promote racial equality. Local authorities and other public bodies must be proactive in promoting race equality. Policy and service delivery decision must be fair and in keeping with the intentions of the Act; they must monitor their employment practices and procedures and undertake ethnic monitoring. *Source: Bridging Communities - Citizens Advice Bureau, March 2002*

Refugee:

Under international law, the word 'refugee' has a very precise meaning, as set out in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees. In the Convention, a refugee is defined as someone who:

- Has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion;
- Is outside the country they belong to or normally reside in and
- Is unable or unwilling to return home for fear of persecution *Source: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk*

Refugee Community Organisation:

Organisations run by and for refugees which provide a wide range of services for its members as well as serving the community as a whole. These can include practical, cultural and social support, information and advice, lobbying etc.

Social Inclusion:

A shorthand term for the activities undertaken to help communities and individuals tackle the multiple problems affecting their neighbourhoods, such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown.

Source: adapted from the Social Exclusion Unit website.

Work Permit:

Permission gained by employers to employ a worker from overseas.

APPENDIX 5

Commonly Used Abbreviations around asylum seekers and refugees

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| BA | - | Benefits Agency |
| BAFR | - | Bradford Action for Refugees |
| BME | - | Black minority ethnic |
| CASS | - | Calderdale Asylum Seekers Support |
| CHIP | - | Community housing and Inclusion project |
| CLS | - | Community Legal Services |
| DOH | - | Department of Health |
| DWP | - | Departmental of Works & Pensions |
| EAL | - | English as an additional language |
| ECHR | - | European convention on Human Rights |
| ECRE | - | European Council on Refugees and Exiles |
| ELR | - | Exceptional Leave to Remain |
| EMAS | - | The ethnic minority achievement service |
| ERF | - | European Refugee Fund |
| ESOL | - | English for speakers of other languages |
| FE | - | Further Education |
| GO | - | Government Office |
| HO | - | Home Office |
| HP | - | Humanitarian Protection |
| ILR | - | Indefinite leave to remain |
| IS | - | Income Support |
| JR | - | Judicial Review |
| JSA | - | Job Seekers Allowance |
| KRAFT | - | Kirklees Refugees and friends together |
| LASSN | - | Leeds Asylum Support Network |
| NASS | - | National Asylum Support Service |
| NETT | - | Nation-wide Ethnic Transport training organisation |
| NI NO | - | National insurance number |
| NIA Act | - | Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002) |
| NRC | - | Northern Refugee Centre |
| PCT | - | Primary Care Trust |
| RC | - | Refugee Council |
| RCO | - | Refugee Community organisation |
| RETAS | - | Refugee Education training and Advisory services |
| RSL | - | Registered Social Landlord |
| SCCD | - | Standing Conference for Community Development |
| YHCAR | - | Yorkshire & Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers & Refugees |
| YHA | - | Yorkshire & Humber Assembly |
| YHRSP | - | Yorkshire & Humberside Refugee Sector Partnership |

