

Guidance for Equal DPs working with Asylum Seekers (Theme I)

Guidance for Theme I
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1.0 National Policy on Asylum and Immigration

1.1 Refugee status

The UK, as a signatory of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, is committed to ensure that those who are fleeing prosecution are given the protection they need. As defined in the Convention a refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'. However a refugee's leave to remain in the UK is initially limited to 2 years, or extended to 5 years.¹

In Britain, there are key differences between the entitlements of refugees who have received a positive decision on their asylum case and of asylum seekers who have not. For accepted refugees Government policy encourages integration into employment as quickly as possible – but for asylum seekers support is limited to language, orientation, social and pre-vocational opportunities only, with paid and unpaid work explicitly forbidden in most cases. These differences determine the extent of and limit to Theme 1's activities.

1.2 Asylum and Immigration Act 2004

The **Asylum and Immigration Act 2004** introduced changes to the way that asylum seekers and their applications to remain are dealt with. These changes include:

- A refugee loan scheme instead of backdated benefit payments (following consultation, likely to be introduced during 2006);
- Powers to attach 'community activity' requirements to 'hard case'² payments (introduced but later withdrawn);
- Application of 'hard case' measures to failed asylum seeking families, as well as single applicants (this may be dropped);
- Access to social housing restricted to the areas where those given permission to stay have been dispersed (the so-called 'local connection');
- Requirement for non-EEA nationals to demonstrate their permission to remain the UK before giving notice of an intended marriage at a designated registry office;
- Penalties (such as detention in goal) for arriving in the UK without documentation;
- Expansion of safe third country provisions;
- Substantial changes in the asylum appeals process (and reduction in legal support);
- The possibility of electronic tagging (introduced in 2006).

¹ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/news/press_releases/changes_to_the_immigration.html

² 'Hard case' payments is the term commonly used for support to failed asylum seekers who cannot, for justifiable reasons, be returned, but have never the less agreed to be returned as and when possible.

The **New Asylum Model**, which has developed since February 2005, has three key characteristics: 'segmentation', fast track processing and case ownership. 'Segmentation' is the separation of cases into groups based on evidence gleaned at the initial interview concerning the type of application (child / family with one or more children, late application, from a third country etc.). Fast track processing reduces the time for legal advice or gathering evidence and between first interview and initial decision from 2 months to 2 weeks. Casework teams for case ownership will be established in the 7 major dispersal sites (Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle Leeds and then Solihull) and applicants will increasingly receive the decision on their claim in person when reporting to their case owner. For more detailed information about current procedures and processes check the Refugee Council website³.

1.3 The government's 5 year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration

The Government's **5 year strategy for asylum and immigration**⁴, launched in February 2005, outlined how current work schemes⁵ for particular groups of migrant workers will be incorporated into a points-based system to focus on labour market needs and including earlier schemes for highly skilled migrants such as postgraduate dentists and doctors, trainee GPs, student nurses and science and engineering graduates.

The 5 year strategy reaffirmed commitment to the Geneva Convention, but has outlined strict measures for immigration control, including:

- Stringent systems for electronic checks, finger printing, TB screening, ID cards, and prosecution for destroying documents;
- Temporary refugee status for successful asylum applicants, initially for 5 years, rather than immediate permanent status;
- Requiring migrants and refugees to pass tests on English language and knowledge of the UK, if they want citizenship;
- Fixed penalty fines for employers for each illegal worker they employ;
- Voluntary or enforced removal of time limited migrants and failed asylum applicants, including unaccompanied children.

The strategy confirmed that refugees and skilled workers have to be able to demonstrate, before they are granted permanent status, that they can support themselves and their families. Up to date information about the progress of the supporting legislation⁶ and a comprehensive summary of the procedures and regulations affecting asylum seekers⁷ can be found on the Home office website. The final version of the Immigration, Asylum and

³ <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/briefings/newasylummodelMar06.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm64/6472/6472.pdf>

⁵ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/news/press_releases/a_points-based_system.html and <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/command-points-based-migration?view=binary>

⁶ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/legislation.html

⁷ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/policy_instructions.html

Nationality Bill, will include data capture and sharing powers for the borders agencies. There is also a new clause removing in country appeal processes.

Annex A summarises the main rights and entitlements for asylum seekers awaiting decisions (and if refugee status is granted) as of February 2006.

Integration Matters, A National Strategy for Refugee Integration⁸, published by the Home Office and **Working to Rebuild Lives**⁹, published by DWP, outline practical steps being taken to integrate accepted refugees – and both strategies receive further attention later on in this guidance note. A government press release¹⁰ summarised the complementarity between the two strategies, designed to ensure cross-government action to ensure refugees are able to make a full and positive contribution to society. Key elements of the Government's cross departmental plans include:

- Replacing automatic back payments of income support to all refugees with a loan system targeted at helping integration;
- A mentoring scheme to give new refugees intensive one-to-one support with a dedicated caseworker to help them find work and update specialist skills;
- Helping refugees towards employment, enabling them to feel economically and socially included;
- Encouraging more refugees to use Jobcentre Plus services. Research suggests that around half of unemployed refugees do not use these facilities; and
- Building stronger partnerships with the voluntary and community sectors, and other stakeholders, to plan and deliver the support that refugees need.

Asylum seekers are excluded from the integration strategy until a positive decision on their case is received – at which point the SUNRISE programme or Strategic Upgrade in National Refugee Integration Services (piloted in selected areas during 2005/6 and subject to evaluation during 2006/7) is to provide a 28 day window for tailored support. Although the Home Office currently uses its Purposeful Activities Fund¹¹ to support volunteering and other activities for asylum seekers, 2006 may see this fund and the refugee challenge Fund closed as services for refugees and asylum seekers are reorganised and rationalised on a more regional basis. Meanwhile, asylum seekers whose applications have failed but whose circumstances mean they continue to receive NASS support (hard case payments), are expected to undertake 'community activities'¹².

Volunteering and other appropriate activities developed through Equal Theme I (but not currently funded through the PAF) include work shadowing, skills audits, ESOL, community

⁸http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/refugee_integration0.html

⁹http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/wrl/main_rep.pdf

¹⁰http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/news/press_releases/2.html

¹¹http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/refugee_integration0/challenge_fund_and.html

¹²http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/community_activities/0.html

based volunteering, specialist support for HIV+ asylum seekers, and cross-cultural activities. See section 3 for further information about relevant Theme I provision.

Home Office asylum data for 2005¹³

During 2005 the number of applications for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, fell to the lowest level since 1994, but with numbers relatively consistent:

Quarter	Number of Dependents
Quarter 2	6,220
Quarter 3	6,315
Quarter 4	6,165

Overall the top five applicant nationalities in 2005 were

Country	Number of Dependents
Iran	3,140
Somalia	1,770
Eritrea	1,760
China	1,735
Afghanistan	1,585

The number from Iranian, Somali and Chinese nationals fell in 2005 by 9%, 31% and 27% respectively whilst the numbers from Eritrean and Afghan nationals rose by 60% and 13% respectively.

The data for the final quarter of 2005 shows:

- there were 6,165 applications in Q4 2005, 27% lower than the corresponding quarter in 2004 (8,480);
- in Q4 the greatest number of applications were from Iran (820), Eritrea (595) and Afghanistan (510), with numbers arriving from Afghanistan up 36% from the previous quarter (375);
- the other main applicant nationalities in Q4 were China (470), Somalia (405), Zimbabwe (385), Nigeria (265), Pakistan (255), Democratic Republic of Congo (235) and Iraq (185);
- these top 10 nationalities accounted for 67% of all applications in Q4;
- for the seventh consecutive quarter the highest number of applications were from Iranian nationals and were 9% higher than for Q3;

¹³ Quarterly national and regional asylum statistics are available on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

- applications also increased during Q4 for nationals of Zimbabwe (up 46% on Q3), Nigeria (up 8% on Q3) and China (up 3% on Q3);
- 80% of new applications in 2004/5 were decided within two months, 88% within four months and 91% within six months;
- there were 27,495 initial decisions in 2005 as a whole (around 2,000 more than the total number of applications for the year), of which 5,645 took place in Q4;
- 3,525 applicants were removed in Q4, the fourth consecutive increase and 20% more than in Q4 2004(2,945)
- in 2005 the highest number of removals was to Iraq (375), followed by Serbia and Montenegro (355), Turkey (340) Afghanistan (300) and Pakistan (210).

Quarterly asylum statistics now include reasons why individuals have been released from detention and information on the length of time spent by children in detention. There is also updated information on the time taken to process cases up to and including final appeal, which shows that in 2004/2005 67% of cases had a final decision within six months, but that as many as 20% of decisions were overturned on appeal. The data report for Q4 of 2005 also includes information about section 55 assessments¹⁴, managed by the Croydon and regional offices of NASS (National Asylum Seeker Services).¹⁵

¹⁴ Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

¹⁵http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/applying/national_asylum_support/about_us.html

2.0 Regional Dispersal

Within London, the ratio of refugee and asylum seekers to the city's population is believed to be around one in 20, around 30 times greater than the UK average¹⁶. Immigration has had wide impact on the cultural and social life of London, as well as on the economic development of the city, but increased pressures on housing and support in London and the South East triggered, in 1999/2000, the implementation of the regional dispersal policy.

Regional dispersal has a particular impact on recent asylum seekers as it is they, rather than accepted refugees, who are 'dispersed' shortly after they arrive in the UK. Migrant Helpline, Refugee Action, the Refugee Arrivals Project, Refugee Council, Scottish Refugee Council and Welsh Refugee Council are funded by National Asylum Seeker Services (NASS) to support this process. Dispersal was intended for areas that could provide support services but in practice availability of housing has been the key factor.

National, regional and local refugee community organisations (RCOs) and refugee support organisations (RSOs) are involved in range of activities in addition to advice and guidance, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and training / volunteering¹⁷. Such activities, as for **Equal DPs**, include:

- Developing partnerships between refugee communities and mainstream public service providers;
- Access to ready made formal or informal networks of providers, education and health services; and
- Leadership in developing the training and advice services that refugees need.

In Scotland, Wales and all nine English Regions, **regional consortia for asylum seeker and refugee support** develop and implement regional strategies that provide links between central and local government as well as the voluntary and private sectors. Each regional consortium functions slightly differently but generally to coordinate support around housing and other services in the dispersal areas for asylum seekers and refugees – with the intention that asylum seekers who gain refugee status should remain in their dispersal area, unless family links or an employment offer exist elsewhere¹⁸.

¹⁶ Greater London Authority, "Briefing on the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002 by the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, Second Reading Debate, April 24, 2002"

http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/refugees/docs/NIA_bill_briefing.pdf

¹⁷ The British Refugee Council website includes details of the refugee community organisations and agencies operating in each region www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

¹⁸ A Home office research study, exploring the factors affecting the successful dispersal of asylum seekers, was due to be completed in 2005, reviewing:

- successful community relations between recent immigrants and host communities;
- Asylum seekers', refugees' and stakeholders' perceptions of dispersal; and
- Factors to predict when and how dispersal is likely to be successful.

3.0 Focusing on provision for asylum seekers in Equal Theme I

Theme I is exceptional within **Equal** in providing funding specifically for DPs working with asylum seekers. The planned focus for Theme I DPs is to support asylum seekers' personal development, through generic skills development, ESOL and volunteering, and through relevant guidance, mentoring or specialist support for particular sub groups. Guidance in the **Equal** Second Round Handbook states that within Theme I:

- *Such support should focus on enabling asylum seekers to play an active role in society, and to enable those who are subsequently granted leave to stay to make a more rapid transition to the labour market.*

Asylum seekers do not generally have permission to work, hence the focus on language and orientation rather than direct preparation for paid work. However, as of February 2005, permission to work may be granted in some cases where reaching an initial decision on asylum status has taken more than 12 months, through no fault of the applicant. This change should help providers and participants to estimate better the timeframe for their activities with individual asylum seekers – although the numbers of asylum seekers granted such permission to work are likely to be low and they can still continue to participate in Theme I projects.

Guidance in the **Equal** Second Round Handbook also states that:

- *Asylum seekers who obtain refugee status, or temporary rights to work while their application is receiving further attention, may continue to receive assistance under Theme I.*

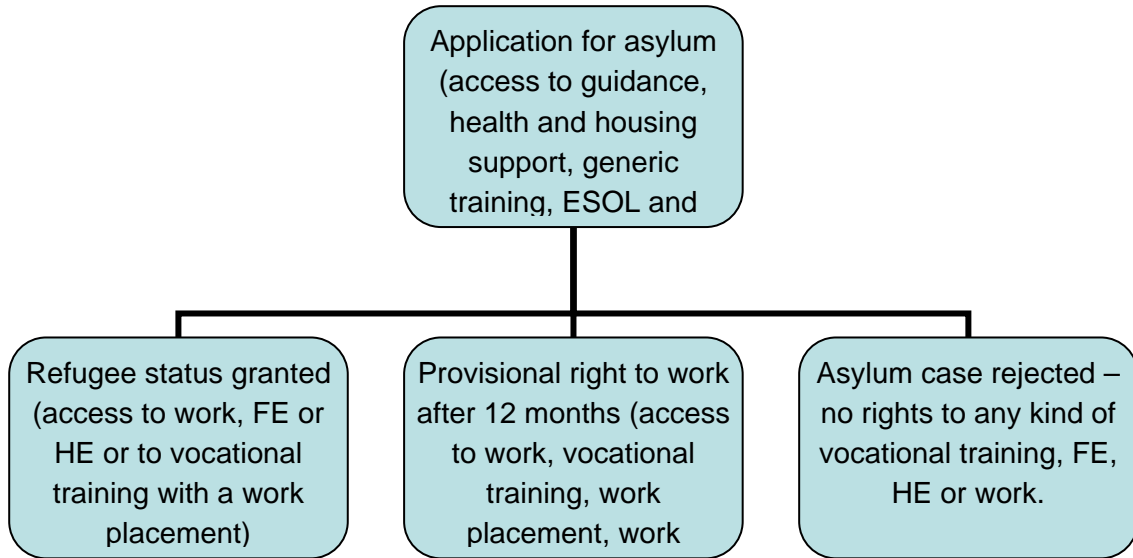
However, building in timely opportunities for individuals to review and move on, for example, from orientation guidance and ESOL to volunteering, will help providers and participants in managing the indeterminate nature of the asylum period. Such progression pathways are a critical part of integration process and evidence shows that guidance, language, volunteering, mentoring and work experience all play a part. So Theme I DPs need to build in flexible progression pathways, which can lead into vocational training, FE or employment as soon as is practical after the permission to work has been granted.

3.1 Progression pathways, skills development and future employability

Overall, roughly one in three asylum seekers receive a positive decision on their application to remain in the UK¹⁹. So the potential for losing participants from Theme I projects (focussed on the asylum seeking stage) are high. In simple terms, an individual's pathway looks something like this:

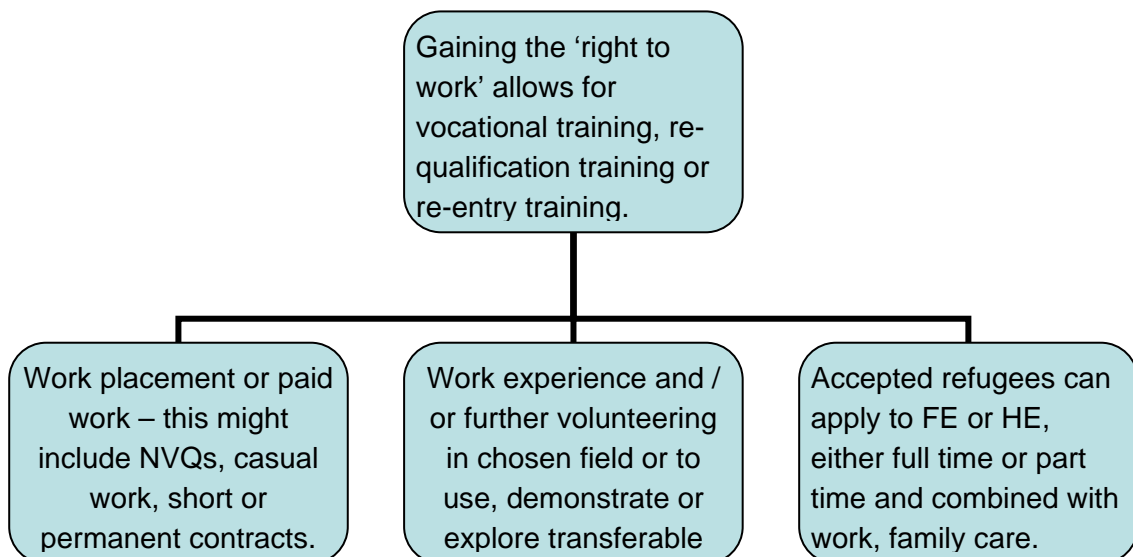
¹⁹ *Integration Matters*, Home Office, 2005

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws___policy/refugee_integration0/a_national_strategy.html



In practice, within Theme I projects, this means that asylum seekers receive tailored advice, guidance and support, join ESOL classes and can participate in skills audits. There are opportunities for options counselling, for developing personal skills, communication skills, and cultural awareness. This can therefore be a productive time, whether the decision received on an individual asylum application is positive or negative. Some asylum seekers may need health or mental health counselling. Others will be ready to volunteer with RCOs or other local VSOs - although for newly arrived families, much of their time may be taken up with family support or caring activities.

In theory, gaining permission to work opens up a wealth of additional options.



In practice employment and under employment is known to be much higher for refugees than for other minority groups. This difference appears even greater when comparisons focus on those groups with high levels of skills and training. The completion of a Theme I DP's responsibilities is in moving individuals on from generic provision such as vocational

guidance (and / or volunteering) to gaining access to specifically job-related training, work placements / work experience and work. At best, this will make good use of previous experience and future aspirations. The importance of tailored support in doing so is well known²⁰. Although individual and immediate needs for paid work (any work even if poorly paid and unsustainable), often conflict with such longer term aims, as refugees and asylum seekers are generally more than willing to take jobs that are well below their skills and qualifications²¹

Following publication of **Working to Rebuild Lives**²², the DWP is already working on a range of improvements, which focus on:

- Ways to develop routes from NASS support to Jobcentre Plus provision to encourage as many new refugees as possible into employment;
- Improving the ability of Jobcentre Plus to provide the right level of interpreting help for those who need it;
- Better flows of information and between statutory and voluntary sector support services;
- Better ways to involve community and voluntary sectors and employers in the process;
- More effective integration of ESOL within work preparation training²³.

Theme I DPs will want to explore how best to support this moving on process within their localities, with routes suitable for asylum seekers with permission to work, as well as for those given HP, DL and refugee status. Such support can complement, rather than pre-empt, the proposed casework support available to those gaining refugee status.

3.2 Lessons from Equal Round 1 for DPs joining Theme I

The guidance from **Equal** for New Member States²⁴ includes fact sheets on 'Advice, Education and Training' and 'Employment for Asylum Seekers'. The European Thematic Group for Theme I has produced useful papers also on Capacity Building, Promising Practices in Advice, Education and Training, and Skills Audits.²⁵ These sources offer some advice useful also to GB DPs, based on what worked well in Round 1. In particular there are key lessons to bear in mind when planning Action 2:

²⁰ *Exploring proposals for a national strategy on refugee employment and integration*, World of Work Conference Report, 2004

²¹ *The Forbidden Workforce: asylum seekers, the employment concession and access to the UK labour market*, ASSET DP, March 2005

²² http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2003/wrl/main_rep.pdf

²³ The Employability Forum Conference on March 22nd 2006 will review progress to date in 'Working to Rebuild Lives' <http://www.employabilityforum.co.uk/>

²⁴ *Asylum Seekers in the EU: the challenges of integration*, 2004

²⁵ http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/empl/equal_etg/library?l=/etg5&vm

- Skills audits²⁶ can be used both to focus asylum seekers' personal development and to convince other actors of their potential.
- Unpaid traineeships, placements, 'work shadowing' and voluntary work are all effective in raising employers' awareness and individual confidence about refugees' and asylum seekers' potential contributions to the labour market²⁷.
- Language courses combined with computing or a vocational or citizenship context have helped asylum seekers to learn the language more quickly²⁸.
- Focus on vocational areas where asylum seekers could 'make a difference' so that they are not considered as 'competitors' in the local labour market.

In selecting appropriate progression routes, or in seeking to change existing provision, Theme I DPs can also draw on the Vocational Training Good Practice Guide prepared by Franc Terre d'Asil for ECRE. This advocates a comprehensive approach to vocational training, involving refugees in planning and objectives, as the best way to achieve effective results. In practice, this generally means:

- Practical courses, theoretical courses, training in a company ('on-the job' training) and language courses should all be interlinked.
- Vocational training programmes should include job search techniques, modules on how to apply for a job and how to learn interview skills; post training support should also always be provided after a vocational training programme as a way to turn training into professional integration.

There is also useful data for 'case making' purposes in *The Forbidden Workforce: asylum seekers, the employment concession and access to the UK labour market*, launched by the ASSET DP, at an Action 3 conference in March 2005.

Additional and regularly updated information about Equal events, conferences and relevant reports is posted on the **Equal** website²⁹.



²⁶ ASSET DP / NIACE. For DPs not familiar with 'skills audits', these usually include identification of 'soft' and 'hard' skills such as qualifications, competencies, work experience and language comprehension. Typically this is followed up with validation, a written portfolio or CV and sourcing of appropriate options and opportunities.

²⁷ ATLAS DP. Also LENRA DP, although part of Theme B not Theme I, has produced an Employer Code of Practice relevant to refugees and asylum seekers.

²⁸ LASAR DP Community Orientation project

²⁹ <http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk>

4.0 New Approaches to integration for accepted refugees

A significant feature of the Home Office Refugee Integration Conference in June 2004 was the extent to which views were openly exchanged, with many RCOs represented. The conference presented housing, language, employment, education and training, and health as five inter-related aspects of effective integration. Presentations and workshops included local authority planning and impact in dispersal areas, the negative impact of the media, and the positive impacts of mentoring, partnership working in housing and health, volunteering and vocational training, and the use of integration indicators.

Following further consultation, the final version of **Integration Matters** was published on March 9th 2005. The strategy is based around a definition of integration as the process that takes place *'when refugees are empowered to: achieve their full potential as members of British Society; contribute fully to the community; and access the services to which they are entitled'*.

Of particular interest to **Equal DPs** across all themes, the strategy includes what is known as the SUNRISE programme. The pilots developing and delivering this approach³⁰ use the 28 day grace period, between refugee recognition and withdrawal of NASS support or accommodation, to help prepare and implement a personal integration plan which will include provision for:

- housing advice;
- entry into employment - usually by arranging and ensuring contact with Jobcentre Plus but there will be other pathways for particular groups of refugees, especially the highly skilled;
- advice on benefits - usually by arranging and ensuring contact with Jobcentre Plus;
- other financial advice;
- contact with other services, particularly health and education where this has not already been made or where the refugee moves to another locality;
- English-language tuition and advice about access to training where needed;
- opportunities for volunteering and for being mentored, if desired;
- information on family reunification;
- contacts with community, cultural or faith organisations, if sought.

Follow up interviews, carried out by Refugee Action, are designed to focus longer term support, continue to signpost education and training opportunities and ensure that the personal integration plan is achieved. The key objective of the scheme is to facilitate smoother and quicker integration into the refugee's new life in Britain enabling them to meet their full potential and contribute to the community as soon as possible.

³⁰ The pilots commenced in October 2006 and are located in London (Refugee Arrivals Project with Migrant Helpline as a major partner), Leeds/Sheffield (a partnership of the city councils supported by Refugee Housing Association and Refugee Council), Manchester (Refugee Action) and Scotland (Scottish Refugee Council).

The intention is that such support will be lead by the Home Office but with the government departments responsible for social benefits, employment, health, housing and education all fully involved. The 11 Regional Consortia for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support, which are already in place, may provide necessary links between central government and local government services, the voluntary and private sector – offering opportunities for a partnership approach to SUNRISE delivery and opportunities for review through the National Refugee Integration Forum. The SUNRISE pilots will be evaluated during 2006/7 prior to any national roll out, for example through the Regional Strategic Co-ordination Bodies.

The Home Office has selected eight indicators by which progress in achieving effective integration will be measured. These indicators relate to:

- employment,
- English or Welsh language attainment,
- volunteering,
- contact with community organisations,
- take up of British citizenship,
- housing standards,
- reporting racial, cultural or religious harassment, and
- access to education.

These indicators will underpin an on-going, longitudinal, national study of refugees and other migrants, managed by the Home Office.

In practice, personal safety, effective communication and gaining employment appropriate to abilities and skills are key issues. In January 2005, the Home office published **Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society**³¹, the Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion. A further report (a literature review) on **What works in Improving Community Relations of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Other Recent Migrants** has also been commissioned. The Home Office publication in 2004 of **The New and the Old, Life in the UK** recommended a preparation framework based on understanding Britain's institutions, services, law, employment and sources of help and information in a multi-cultural society. Citizenship tests and citizenship ceremonies commenced in 2005.

The **Scottish Refugee Integration Forum's** (SRIF's) action plan was published separately in February 2003. Glasgow is a key NASS dispersal area and this is where most asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to Scotland live. The SRIF has responsibilities to develop action plans to:

- enable the successful integration of refugees in Scotland and the provision of more accessible services;
- collect and disseminate examples of good practice from around the country; and
- play a role in promoting positive images of refugees as members of society.

³¹ <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/racial13.htm>

During 2005, the **National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF)** for **England** was reviewed and revised. The NRIF brings together representatives from government departments, voluntary sector organisations, local authorities and the private sector – within five (previously nine) subgroups:

- Employment and Training Subgroup
- Community and Media Subgroup
- Accommodation and Community Safety Subgroup
- Children and Young People Subgroup
- Health Subgroup

The NRIF's primary roles are to:

- monitor the implementation of the Home Office strategy by government departments, consortia and refugee agencies (primarily for refugees not asylum seekers);
- offer views and guidance to government departments, consortia and refugee agencies on how the strategy might be developed and improved over time;
- consider the development of national and regional strategies in the cluster areas where asylum seekers are dispersed;
- disseminate best practice from around the country;
- circulate information on known available resources to the members of the forum and consider how resources may best be utilised across different fields of work;
- play a key role in promoting positive images of refugees as members of British society.

The **Advisory Board for Naturalisation and Integration (ABNI)**, which was set up in November 2004 as an independent public board, provides advice to the Government on the integration agenda as set out in the Crick Report *The New and the Old*. Membership of the board is drawn from leading public figures and experts in the fields of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), citizenship training, employment of migrants and community development and integration.

Wales and the **English Regions** have also begun planning towards a more co-ordinated approach. However, Theme I DPs need to be aware that, at government level, integration policy focuses on accepted refugees only – not on asylum seekers, for whom provision is limited.



5.0 European Issues

Following the Tampere Summit in Finland in 1999, a two-stage policy was agreed – firstly to adopt minimum standards in relation to refugees and secondly to develop a common procedure and uniform status to be applied within the EU to anyone in need of international protection.

The first stage of reviews and agreement focused on harmonisation rather than best practice and covered:

- The Member States' responsibility for examining an asylum claim;
- Minimum standards on reception on asylum seekers;
- Minimum standards on qualification of third country nationals as refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection;
- Minimum standards on procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee status;
- Minimum standards on temporary protection.

It is widely recognised that such harmonisation reduced protection rather than extended it.

Britain's 6 month presidency (2006) of the EU³² included actions on:

- security of travel documents, biometrics in residence permits and passports and towards a solution for biometrics in relation to visas;
- people trafficking and operational activities to combat organised crime;
- future funding for border, integration, returns and refugee projects;
- improved practical co-operation on asylum (forthcoming EU communiqué);
- resettlement programmes (such as the Gateway programme in Britain);
- exchange of best practice and integration of migrants (forthcoming EU communiqué).

5.1 Accession States

In May 2004, when the European Union expanded to include an additional 10 members, the UK agreed that asylum seekers from the accession states who were receiving NASS benefit before May 1st could continue to do so, although a tightening of the habitual residence test and registration under the Workers Registration Scheme apply to those subsequently arriving and seeking work. Nationals from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta can now visit, live and study in any other EU Member State and are allowed to work in the UK and in Ireland. **Equal** has specific guidance on Building Successful Development Partnerships for Asylum Seekers for new DPs in the accession states.

³² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/eupresidency2005/presidency-priorities/eu-immigration-and-asylum/?version=1>

5.2 European Refugee Fund

The European Refugee Fund (ERF) was introduced in 1998, mainly as a response to the Kosovo refugee crisis, with 141 projects being funded across Europe. In 2000-2004, the fund supported three strands of activity: member state projects; community action projects across the EU; and emergency measures.³³ For 2005-2007 there are four key priorities:

1. Reception measures for asylum-seekers, including measures to support children;
2. Projects around the process of granting and withdrawing of asylum status;
3. Voluntary returns and related resettlement programmes (which currently absorb 70% of the fund in the UK);
4. The integration of refugees within the country of settlement, with particular focus on children and families.

Other than voluntary returns, UK ERF priorities focus on:

- Vulnerable groups, such as women, children, the disabled or mentally ill
- Areas outlined in the national refugee integration strategy Integration Matters
- Community actions with a trans-national aspect.
- Links with other related areas including partnership working

However ERF funds cannot be used as match funding for Equal.

5.3 Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP)³⁴

VARRP supports individual asylum seekers rather than community projects. The programme is open to all asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers. Reintegration assistance (not cash) is provided and may include:

- vocational training
- education
- help in setting up a small business

There are also specific aid programmes in relation to refugees or asylum seekers who may wish to return to Afghanistan.

³³ http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/refugee/funding_refugee_en.htm

³⁴ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/voluntary_assisted.html

6.0 Challenges for Theme I Partnerships in Equal Round 2

The main issues, opportunities and challenges that face Theme I DPs relate to the on-going changes being made in Great Britain to the procedures, processes, restrictions and concessions that apply differently to asylum seekers and refugees, to EU migrants and to other migrants through the introduction of a 'points based' migration policy³⁵. Moreover with existing provision for refugees and asylum seekers subject to national review, a greater emphasis is being placed on regional co-ordination and rationalisation.

6.1 The context for impact in Great Britain

Theme I **Equal** DP's in Round 1 were based in Glasgow, Liverpool, and nationally through the British Refugee Council, and for Round 2 are based in London, Birmingham and Glasgow. **Equal** has already had opportunities to make some positive impact on planning and practice at regional as well as local and national levels. Such impact takes account of the following challenges and opportunities:

- Most asylum seekers in the UK do not have permission to work, which restricts Theme I beneficiaries from seeking paid work before a positive decision is reached on their case.
- Theme I activities seek to benefit asylum seekers whether they gain the right to stay in the UK or have to return home – planning and skills development must be applicable in both situations.
- Activities that encourage co-operation between participants and their host community are also encouraged.

The greatest challenge for Round 2 GB DPs is in adding value to opportunities for asylum seekers that accelerate their integration if they remain in Britain. Of secondary interest is the impact of such opportunities also on those who return home.

6.2 Impact so far

Round 1 DPs agreed a mainstreaming strategy, reviewed periodically, with the following overall aims:

- To develop an employment strategy to support the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers in the UK;
- To encourage adult education, training and employment practitioners to share good practice to improve the quality of services to asylum seekers.

Networking, dissemination and mainstreaming focused mainly on:

- ESOL and basic Skills, IAG, auditing and qualifications;
- volunteering, working with employers, orientation and job search training;

³⁵ Section 1 provides an update on policy changes during 2005 /6.

- mentoring / befriending, AP(E)L and recognition of overseas qualification;
- self-employment; and
- work with schools.

The ASSET DP's mainstreaming conference held in March 2005 showcased a range of positive interventions, relating to ESOL delivery, tutor training and support, on-line IAG, skills audits and volunteering³⁶. The conference organised by EASI DP in November 2005 focussed specifically on volunteering – sharing good practice both nationally and transnationally³⁷. Asylum matters for Scotland, the report from the ATLAS DP conference held in June 2005 includes chapters on topics such as community involvement, advocacy, mental health, volunteering, work shadowing and ESOL.³⁸ LASAR mainstreaming focussed on good practice with young people, children and families.³⁹

Overall lessons passed on from GB Theme I Round 1 to Round 2:

- APL (accreditation of prior learning), tailored ESOL and skills audits are all appropriate at this stage – and are effective in supporting asylum seekers and in changing employers' attitudes.
- DPs can work effectively in partnership with the public and private sector, for example in relation to volunteering or orientation for work – as well as with the voluntary sector in general and RCOs in particular.
- DPs can combat negative images of asylum seekers effectively in the press by publicising the practical aspects of integration activities⁴⁰ – complementing other activities with host communities that promote community cohesion.

Building on these opportunities, but seeking to introduce new aspects arising from their particular experience, Round 2 DPs are developing joint mainstreaming opportunities from 2006, focused on:

- Orientation, information, advice and guidance;
- Delivery of effective language support;
- Community cohesion; and
- Pre-vocational support.

The conference held in September 2005, *An Equal Future for Asylum Seekers, Investing in Inclusive Futures*, and targeted at fund holders for match or replication funding, drew out evidence from Round 1 and Round 2 projects around these four themes. The revised

³⁶ <http://www.asset-uk.org.uk/letter.htm>

³⁷ *Exchanges for an Equal Europe, Conference Report*, Educational Action International, 2005

³⁸ <http://www.atlas-scotland.co.uk/library6.htm>

³⁹ Contact Liverpool Network for Change / Merseyside Refugee Network
<http://www.thepeoplescentre.com/LNFC/>

⁴⁰ ATLAS and Oxfam have produced a Fair Play Guide to working with journalists

mainstreaming strategy agreed for Round 2 proposes when and how evidence on these issues will be disseminated to selected stakeholders and target audiences.⁴¹

6.3 Evidence of good practice from Round 1

Good practice from GB Theme I Round 1 of benefit to asylum seekers and their host community can be summarised as⁴²:

- Integrating language teaching into a vocational programme and/or on-the-job training is not only cost effective; it is also empowering for asylum seekers and speeds up their eventual integration.
- The development of specific vocational programmes for asylum seekers facilitates the learning process and enables them to better profile themselves within the labour market.
- Traineeships and other forms of placements are a first and important step which helps the integration of asylum seekers and can lead to real employment⁴³.
- Building strong relationships with employers, employer associations and social partners is essential for enhancing awareness of the potential of asylum seekers and the value that they can bring to an organisation⁴⁴.
- The assessment of the skills, qualifications and prior learning of asylum seekers enhances their motivation and self-confidence, it also helps develop a realistic perspective of how they fit into the labour market⁴⁵.
- Tools which facilitate networking and partnership building enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of service providers and improve the integration of asylum seekers.
- The quality of training, advising and counselling activities for those working with asylum seekers is greatly enhanced if emphasis is placed on the specific conditions, needs and potential of the target group.

⁴¹ http://www.equal.ecotec.co.uk/themes/i_asylum.asp

⁴² Asylum Seekers in the EU: the Challenges of Integration (Background Paper for the European Conference Dublin April 1st 2004)

⁴³ ATLAS DP's work shadowing programme proved successful for asylum seekers subsequently receiving refugee status <http://www.atlas-scotland.co.uk/library6.htm>

⁴⁴ ASSET DP's experience with individual employers highlight the importance of seeking out those with a good policy and track record in social /corporate responsibility.

⁴⁵ ASSET / NIACE's skills audits show how this improves the targeting of volunteering opportunities also.

6.4 Recommendations from the European Thematic Network

The European Thematic Group for Theme I (ETG5) has highlighted further strategies to be picked up in Round 2 specifically in relation to advice and guidance, education and training, volunteering and work shadowing. Particular recommendations relevant to working with GB asylum seekers include:

- Building core competencies that are useful whether remaining in the country or subject to repatriation;
- Using work shadowing to raise employers' awareness of the issues involved.
- Training asylum seekers to become mediators, coaches or counsellor;
- Integrating language training into vocational and socio-cultural contexts / citizenship;
- Improving dissemination;
- Using well evidenced good practice for 'case-making';
- Promoting complementarity between **Equal** and ERF initiatives;
- Gaining co-operation between local and regional organisations, including public authorities and the private sector in committing to achieving certain goals.

6.5 The potential for comparative transnational work

Employment and vocational training entitlements vary across Europe, as article 12 of the European Council Directive implemented February 6th 2005 states that:

'Member States may allow applicants for asylum access to vocational training irrespective of whether the applicant has access to the labour market'.

This provides scope for comparing the impact of similar and different types of Theme I activities in largely similar and very different contexts. On-going feedback from Theme I participants, and subsequent tracking, are essential components of the evidence base for influencing domestic policy and strategy – and transnational comparisons of socio-vocational activities have similar potential, through demonstrating comparative impact at national, regional or local level.

6.6 The evidence base for policy recommendations

It is essential that Round 2 DPs continue the practice of highlighting evidence that will convince policy makers of the lessons learnt from the Equal experience. The ASSET DP's mainstreaming conference held in March 2005 showcased a range of positive interventions, relating to ESOL delivery, tutor training and support, on-line IAG, skills audits and volunteering. Alongside output and outcome data, there were telling examples of individual case studies to support the picture of impact portrayed in the workshops. Such opportunities for participant beneficiaries to tell their story are typically the most memorable moments of such events – especially if they include the key ingredients of how, when and why particular activities have provided effective opportunities to use and develop their skills.

Case studies that explore the relationship between current policy, innovative provision and effective integration are particularly valuable. Good examples from Round 1 DPs, which illustrate such links, focus on the impact of education and training provision and readiness for employment⁴⁶ – aspects that underpin the mainstreaming strategy developed during Round 1. Such examples, used wisely, can be just as valuable as data on outcomes, transnational comparisons and formal evaluations.

However, there was a strong emphasis at the 2005 Home Office Integration Conference⁴⁷ on quantitative evidence, particularly random sample trials, with other sources of evidence considered at best to be quasi-experimental. DPs therefore need to be aware that the kind of evidence to convince policy makers across government departments must include a clear rationale on which comparisons can be made. Arguments for 'making a difference' must be based on cost effectiveness, impact and relevance to policy.

6.7 Innovation and on going impact on policy

Round 2 explicitly seeks to introduce new initiatives rather than repeat or replicate those introduced during Round 1. This provides an opportunity to map and fill evidence gaps, to complement the findings from Round 1, and to enhance the recommendations made so far – for example in exploring best ways to provide modular training that combines flexibility and effective progression for a range of circumstances.

Where Theme I projects directly complement aspects of Home Office activity related to asylum seekers or subsequent refugee integration, there is a good case to be made for match funding that recognises this. The Home Office has already expressed interest in evidence relating to joint activities involving asylum seekers and host communities and sponsored the Theme I conference held in September 2005. Evidence from **Equal I**, and from DPs working with refugees within other Themes, may also be considered by the National Refugee Integration Forum.

Other sources of opportunities for complementary activity, partnership or policy impact:

- The regional consortia / regional strategic co-ordination bodies, responsible for developing regional integration strategies;
- The Active Communities Fund, which has a strong focus on mentoring projects across the regions;
- The national, regional and local delivery organisations for the SUNRISE programme;
- Policy developments, such as ChangeUp, and consultation on voluntary sector Compacts, in relation to Active Communities;
- Direct, evidence based input to RDAs, employer organisations, JobCentre Plus.

⁴⁶ See Annex I to this briefing note

⁴⁷ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/refugee_integration0/uk_national_integration.html?

ANNEX A Summarised rights and entitlements for refugees and asylum seekers (February 2006)

Note that although this summary is intended to be sufficient for DP planning purposes, it should not to be taken as the basis for advising individual asylum seekers or refugees.⁴⁸

Table 1: Benefit Entitlements

Benefits	Asylum Seekers	Refugees
Housing	Some 3000 asylum seekers are accommodated in Induction Centres for a period of 6-9 months and while their application is examined. Overall some 30,000 are dispersed and supported through NASS. Once a decision has been reached those granted the status of refugee have 14-28 days to “move on”, while those refused have 14-21 days.	Once granted refugee status, HP or DL, people are entitled to claim housing benefit and apply for public housing if they stay in the area they were dispersed to or have a ‘Local Connection’ i.e. an employment offer or relatives in another area. Support/advice provided through SUNRISE.
Work	Asylum seekers are not generally allowed to work while their application is being processed. However, as of 07-02-05 an asylum applicant may apply for permission to take up certain types of employment if, through no fault of their own, a decision on their asylum application has not been taken within 12 months. ⁴⁹ ('Self employment, business or professional activity' is excluded. Permission lapses if their asylum application fails.)	Once the refugee status of has been granted, permission to work automatically follows. The proposed SUNRISE programme is to provide case work support with a Personal Integration Plan for all those intending to seek work.
Volunteering	Asylum seekers are encouraged to undertake volunteering activity. Such voluntary activity should not amount to either employment or job substitution. Volunteers can be reimbursed for meal or travel costs as an agreed allowance,	No special restrictions apply. Access to volunteering opportunities is encouraged by the Home Office.

⁴⁸ Appropriate advisory services must be formally accredited at level 1 (generic advice) or at level 2 (individual case work), see the Federation of Independent Advice Councils (FIAC) http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/docs/quality_mark/fiac_gh_template.pdf

⁴⁹ The reintroduction of 'permission to work' for some asylum seekers is in response to the European Reception Directive. The implications of this rule change on Equal Theme I is addressed in Section 3 of this guidance for DPs working with asylum seekers.

Guidance for Equal DPs working with asylum seekers (April 2006)

Benefits	Asylum Seekers	Refugees
	but should not be led to believe that voluntary activity is a step towards refugee status.	
Education and training	Advice and guidance, and English courses, can be offered at low cost and often are part time but free, with exemption from FE home fees if in receipt of NASS benefit for over 3 years. Limited access to vocational training, if temporary admission is amended to allow unpaid work and subject to reassessment by NASS to take into account any training allowance. International students fees charged for HE.	Refugees are eligible for Student Support /Education Maintenance Allowance, Access Fund or Hardship Loans. (Those granted HP or DL must wait a further 3 years first.) They are treated as home students for government training schemes, HE, LSC funded FE or WBL.
Education to age 16	Same entitlements to pre-school facilities as other children in the UK, and children aged 5 to 15 are required to go to school	Same entitlements to pre-school facilities as other children in the UK, and children aged 5 to 15 are required to go to school
Welfare Benefits	Those deemed destitute and offered NASS support may receive subsistence support either with or without accommodation support. Some families with children under 15 may continue to receive such support under the Children Act, even if their asylum claim has failed, until such time as they leave or are deported. Some adult 'hard cases' receive full board instead.	Full income support and access to JSA, housing benefit, child benefit, disability benefit and tax credits and social fund payments. (A translated leaflet with an overview of benefits is available from the Refugee Council website.)
Health Service	Free primary or secondary health care services provided by NHS. Unsuccessful asylum seekers at the end of the asylum process have to pay for non-urgent in-patient hospital care.	Free primary and secondary health care services. Local and regional outreach services focused on refugee needs may be available.
Integration Loans		Loans, subject to consultation 2006, and for specified purposes, will be managed through SUNRISE.

Refugee Council offers further information about integration and access to services in its Regional Support Packs. Although these packs are designed for advisors, there are sections on Education, Employment, and Integration that will be particularly useful to **Equal** DPs working with asylum seekers through Theme I or with refugees.

ANNEX B National agencies and refugee organisations relevant to asylum seekers

Institution	Role/Website Information
Cara http://www.academic-refugees.org/frameset.html	The Council for Assisting Refugee Academics assists university teachers or researchers who have lost their jobs as a result of political, racial or religious discrimination and have become refugees in Britain.
Education Action International / RETAS http://www.education-action.org/retas	RETAS, a division of EAI, offers courses, drop-in advice sessions and guides to vocational training, employment and other aspects of integration. Lead partner in the Round 1 LEADER DP.
Employability Forum http://www.employabilityforum	This forum brings together employers, government departments and agencies, voluntary and refugee organisations, to explore and support refugee integration of into the UK labour market.
Home office http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk	The Home Office is the Government department responsible for asylum and immigration policy. Policy changes, dispersal updates, statistics and research reports are posted on the website.
ICAR- Information Centre about Asylum http://www.icar.org.uk/	The ICAR website provides links to resources and statistics concerning asylum and refugees and to their bulletins on current issues.
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants http://www.jcwi.org.uk	JCWI is an independent national voluntary organisation providing policy analysis, news and publications, advice and training courses.
Migrant Helpline http://www.migranthepline.org.uk	The Migrant Helpline provides a wide-ranging reception and advice service to asylum seekers and refugees.
NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) http://www.naric.org.uk	NARIC provides information and advice on the comparability of overseas qualifications with those from the UK.
National Consortia Support Team (NCST)/ National Consortia Consultative Group (NCCG)	The NCST provides support to the 11 regional consortia as well as the NCCG. This includes policy dissemination and response, practice and funding mapping and strategic partnership work with national and regional statutory and voluntary sector organisations.
OXFAM http://www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp/safe/index.htm	Oxfam's UK projects include work with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK to help them challenge and change public, government and media attitudes.
Refugee Action http://www.refugee-action.org.uk	Refugee Action assists newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees. Current projects include mentoring, the Horizons volunteering scheme, and advice services

Guidance for Equal DPs working with asylum seekers (April 2006)

Institution	Role/Website Information
Refugee Council http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk	(some specifically for women). Refugee Council offers policy analysis, statistics, news, publications, training for people working with asylum seekers and refugees, advice and support to asylum seekers across the regions.
Refugee Housing Association http://www.refugeehousing.org.uk	RHA provides housing, support, resettlement and community development unaccompanied young people, families, single asylum seekers and refugees.
Tandem http://www.tandem-uk.com	Tandem's has a Volunteering and Asylum Project to promote good practice in volunteering involving refugees, asylum seekers and others. It also has a sexual health project for refugees and asylum seekers.
Timebank http://www.timebank.org.uk	Timebank's Time Together matches UK citizens in one-on-one mentoring relationships with refugees - promoting integration, tolerance and positive images.



ANNEX C London agencies and refugee organisations relevant to asylum seekers

Institution	Role/Website Information
Asylum Aid http://www.asylumaid.org.uk	Asylum Aid is a charity that gives free legal advice and representation to people seeking asylum in the UK.
EVELYN OLDFIELD UNIT http://www.evelynoldfield.co.uk	Consulting and training services to voluntary organisations concerned with refugees and immigration.
Greater London Authority http://www.london.gov.uk	The GLA plays a strategic role – offering publications, minutes and papers on issues related to immigration policy and implementation.
Islington Training Network	Round 2 DP lead partner for EASI (Empowering Asylum Seekers to Integrate), which is planning to capacity build RCOs and individual asylum seekers through personal skills training and volunteering opportunities.
London Asylum Seekers' Consortium: http://www.westminster.gov.uk/socialservices/lasc/index.cfm	The London Asylum Seekers Consortium acts as a co-ordinating body for 33 London local authorities on matters of refugee integration and asylum support. It provides accommodation and support services, data collection and provision of information to local and central government.
Praxis http://www.praxis.org.uk	Praxis is a community organisation with local partners based in London. Best known for introducing a refugee hosting / housing scheme, it also offers advice, access to interpreter training and a re-qualification course for midwives.
RAGU http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu/home.cfm	RAGU provides advice and training for refugees and asylum seekers with higher level education or professional qualifications. They also research, identify and disseminate best practice.
Refugee Arrivals Project http://refugee-arrivals.org	RAP is a reception service based in West London, providing reception links with NASS and emergency accommodation for single adults, families, unaccompanied children and young people.
Refugees into jobs http://www.go-london.gov.uk/publications/annual_review_2003/refugees_into_jobs.asp	Based in Brent and Harrow, Refugees into Jobs provides training, assistance with job search, voluntary work experience placements and clinical attachments with local hospitals for medical personnel.
RENEWAL http://www.renewalsrb.org.uk	Renewal is a partnership between refugee communities and the public sector. Working in West London., they organise events, provide training or other services.

ANNEX D Regional sources and contacts

Organisation	Role/Website Information
<p>NASS (National Asylum Support Service) http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/applying/national_asylum_support/stakeholders/projects/accommodation_2005.html</p>	<p>NASS, through 11 regional consortia, manages services to asylum seekers across 12 dispersal areas.</p>
<p>North of England Refugee Service http://www.refugee.org.uk</p>	<p>Based in Newcastle, NERS and the Refugee Forum North East work with asylum seeker, refugees and RCOs.</p>
<p>Northern Refugee Centre http://www.nrcentre.org.uk</p>	<p>Based in Sheffield, NRC works with refugees and asylum seekers across Yorkshire and Humberside. Services include volunteering and befriending.</p>
<p>Refugee Action http://www.refugee-action.org.uk</p>	<p>Refugee Action has regional projects in, Nottingham, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth and Kent (For contact details select 'our work' and then 'regional' from the website menus.)</p>
<p>Refugee Council http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk</p>	<p>The Refugee Council has regional offices in Leeds (0113 244 9404), Ipswich (01473 297900), Birmingham (0121 622 1515).</p>
<p>Regional consortia: http://www.refugeeaccess.info/links.asp and select 'asylum consortia' from the menu.</p>	<p>For example, ECARI (East of England Regional Assembly Consortium for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Integration) focuses on strategic co-ordination of services for asylum seekers and refugees across the East of England.</p>
<p>Scottish Refugee Council http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk</p>	<p>The SRC's projects include UK family reunion as part of their work to support integration.</p>
<p>Welsh Refugee Council</p>	<p>Head office is in Cardiff (0292 666 250)</p>

ANNEX E Contact details for NASS Regional Offices

Region	Address	Telephone	Fax
Greater London	1st Floor, Quest House, 11 Cross Rd Croydon CR9 6EL	0208 6330503	0208 6330896
South West	Unit 1B, Portishead Business Park, Wyndam Way, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 7LF	01275 815300	01275 815301
South East & Central	Units 4&6 Whitfield Court, White Cliffs Business Park, Honeywood Road, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PX	01304 873111	01304 873133
East of England	Stuart House, St John's Street, Peterborough, PE1 1QF	01733 847826	01733 847800
East Midlands	Regus House, Herald Way, Pegasus Business Park, Castle Donnington, Derbyshire DE74 2TZ	01332 638617	01332 638290
West Midlands	NASS West Midlands, 3rd Floor Chadwick House, Blenheim Court, Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 2AA	0121 345 8000	0121 345 8096/97
North West	PO Box 191, Manchester Airport, Manchester, M90 3WZ	0161 261 1307	0161 261 1323
Yorkshire and Humberside	Waterside House, Kirkstall Road, LS4 2QB	0113 386 5654	0113 386 5700
North East	Link House, Melbourne Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 2JQ	0191 376 2856	0191 2064276
Wales	Room 216, Regus House, Falcon Drive, Cardiff Bay CF10 4RY	02920 504001	02920 504211
Scotland	Festival Court, 200 Brand Street, Glasgow G51 1DH	0141 4191308	0141 4191329
Northern Ireland	Room 301, Goodwood House, 44-58 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4NN	02870 251 999	02890 547 835

ANNEX F European Institutions and agencies working with asylum seekers

Legislation	
Council of the European Union http://ue.eu.int	Main legislator
EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS http://www.europa.eu.int	Responsible for the legislation proposal The website offers background policy, policy updates, official documents etc
European Parliament http://www.europarl.eu.int	Co-legislator
Umbrella organisations and NGOs	
European Centre for the Study of Migration and Social Care http://www.kent.ac.uk/tizard/useful_links/eurocentre.htm	Useful source for information about integration issues in the UK as well as across Europe.
European Council on Refugees and Exiles http://www.ecre.org	Umbrella organisation of 78 refugee-assisting agencies in 30 countries. Website provides information on policy development at national and EU level, news and publications; activities include advocacy, legal analysis, networking and capacity building.
Refugeenet http://www.refugeenet.org	Funded by the European Refugee Fund - good source of up to date information and links.

ANNEX G UK Immigration and Asylum Legislation 1993-2003

Before 1993, relevant UK legislation focused on immigration rather than asylum, although various refugee resettlement programmes were adopted to reflect the UN Convention. The pace of legal development in the area has, however, accelerated sharply since the 1990s, with five changes and additions to legislation made in just ten years.

The **Immigration and Asylum Aspects Act 1993** incorporated the UK's obligations under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees into UK law. This ensured the right of appeal (albeit with strict time limits) but allowed for asylum applicants to be kept under detention or even in prison while their claim was being considered; it also put in place the basis for 'fast-track' procedures and restricting asylum seekers' access to housing.

The **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996** removed benefit entitlement to in-country asylum applicants, reduced access to housing for asylum seekers and restricted their employment. It also introduced a "white list" of countries considered not to pose serious risks of persecutions. The **Immigration and Asylum Act 1999** introduced the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to administer support services and asylum seeker dispersal. Further changes to support mechanisms and entitlement took effect following the White Paper **Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain** and the **Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002**.

Until 2003, to deal with cases falling outside the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, such as those suffering through the persecution of ethnic group, the Home Office used to grant **Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR)**. This was usually granted for a total of four years (one year followed by a three-year extension) and could lead to **Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)**. However ELR is no longer offered to new cases. As of 1st April 2003, the Home Office had granted **Humanitarian Protection (HP)** or **Discretionary Leave (DL)** to asylum seekers for medical or human rights reasons.⁵⁰

Another option for some refugees is to enter Britain through the **Gateway Protection Programme**⁵¹. UNHCR recommendation, UK security and health checks precede entry, and refugee status is confirmed before arrival. However for 2004 the UK's quota of 500 was well undersubscribed, largely because so few local authorities offered full involvement in the programme.

⁵⁰ In general terms, people granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL), instead of refugee status, gained immediate rights to seek employment and benefit support and full rights (for example to grants for Higher Education as a home student) after three years – a similarly stepped process as for those previously granted Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR).

⁵¹ http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws_policy/policy_instructions/apis/quota_refugee_resettlement.html

ANNEX H Round 1 and Round 2 Equal DPs working with asylum seekers in GB

DP name, lead partner and website / contact details	Brief details
ASPIRE (Birmingham) Birmingham and Solihull LSC http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Based in Birmingham, this Theme I DP draws together voluntary and statutory service providers in supporting refugees seeking employment.
ASSET UK (Asylum Seekers Skills, Empowerment and Training) British Refugee Council http://www.asset-uk.org.uk	In Equal Round 1 ASSET worked with national and regional partners and through employers to develop guidance, training and skills audits
ATLAS Glasgow City Council http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Active in Equal Rounds 1 and 2, ATLAS offers training, guidance, re-accreditation opportunities in IT, mechanics and engineering, work shadowing and capacity building.
EASI Islington Training Network http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Equal Round 2 DP focused on delivering tailor made prevocational training coupled with volunteering opportunities geared to rapid individual transition into the labour market and meanwhile capacity building RCOs.
Haringey ASPIRE Ugandan Community Relief Organisation http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Equal Round 2 DP based in Haringey, planning to provide advice and language support with a strong focus on the integration needs of asylum seekers with HIV/ Aids.
LASAR Contact through Liverpool Network for Change / Merseyside Refugee Network http://www.thepeoplescentre.com/LNFC/	Equal Round 1 Theme I DP based in Liverpool, produced working papers on partnership working, volunteering, family learning and orientation ESOL.
LEADER http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Equal Round 1 DP working within Theme B to improve refugees' employment prospects, for example in the fields of health, childcare and engineering.
LENRA (London East and North Refugee and Asylum Seekers) http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Equal Round 1 Theme B DP, LENRA produced an employer code to support their work on access to training and employment for refugees and asylum seekers.
Refugee Women's Association http://equal.ecotec.co.uk	Equal Round 1 Theme A DP using refugee mentoring and other strategies to support women refugees.

ANNEX I Examples of case studies for mainstreaming purposes

This illustration is of a Somali woman aged 41 on arrival in Scotland in 2003. She received employability support from the Wise Group, part of the Glasgow based Atlas DP.

Project staff recognised immediately that M was keen to work, and tailored a range of courses suited to her needs, including confidence building, self esteem, ICT, and written English, to boost her employability. M. expressed an interest in working in social care (she) made great progress, eventually securing a voluntary work shadowing placement with the Multicultural Adult Day Care Centre. Her Work Shadow Host gave excellent feedback and indicated that he would have no hesitation in offering her a full time position, should she be granted status. M. is ready to embark on her career in social care in Glasgow, having now gained valuable skills and experience in this area, an up to date CV, and knowledge of the UK labour market. However, M. has yet to hear a decision on her claim from the Home Office. In the meantime, she is volunteering her time at the YMCA to ensure her skills in social care remain up to date.

C's experience is in learning English quickly, through ASSET provision at the hostel where she stays, and in regaining self esteem and empowerment through language. When she arrived from Congo she didn't speak any English, but had been teaching and, in her spare time, working in for a Human Rights Observatory.

When I arrived I made an application to learn English at City College and I joined an English class in the Hostel (Emergency Accommodation) with the ASSET-UK project This experience gave me the opportunity to translate for some people's meetings in the Hostel , also in my new apartment when we received a visit from the authorities and the case workers , I can now explain everything that we need , I can make appointments anywhere especially for myself..... Now I am collecting information to help asylum seekers to integrate in to British society.

S told her own story at the ASSET mainstreaming conference in March 2005 – but this is an edited version of an article about her experience published by NIACE in their newsletter. Susan's background in Cameroon was in business – she had run her own shop for four years selling fresh and dried food, groceries and hardware. When she arrived in the UK she was keen to learn and wanted a job that also provided training opportunities so that she could develop her business skills and knowledge. She was subsequently granted leave to remain in the UK and was offered a job in the same company.

The Director of a local company had heard of ASSET UK and felt he would like to offer a work placement for a person seeking asylum..... They were able to offer S a range of office based experiences. Together we agreed a number of work shadows that would enable her to see the range of activities the company pursued in the course of its business. She answered the phones, dealt with the administration and accompanied the Director to some of his meetings.....

There had been reservations amongst the employees of the company, many of which were based on the image that the press portrays of people seeking asylum. S is an outgoing person and her personality has managed to change the attitude of the people she met towards people seeking asylum. It worked for her too; she found the learning about UK business very beneficial and informative.