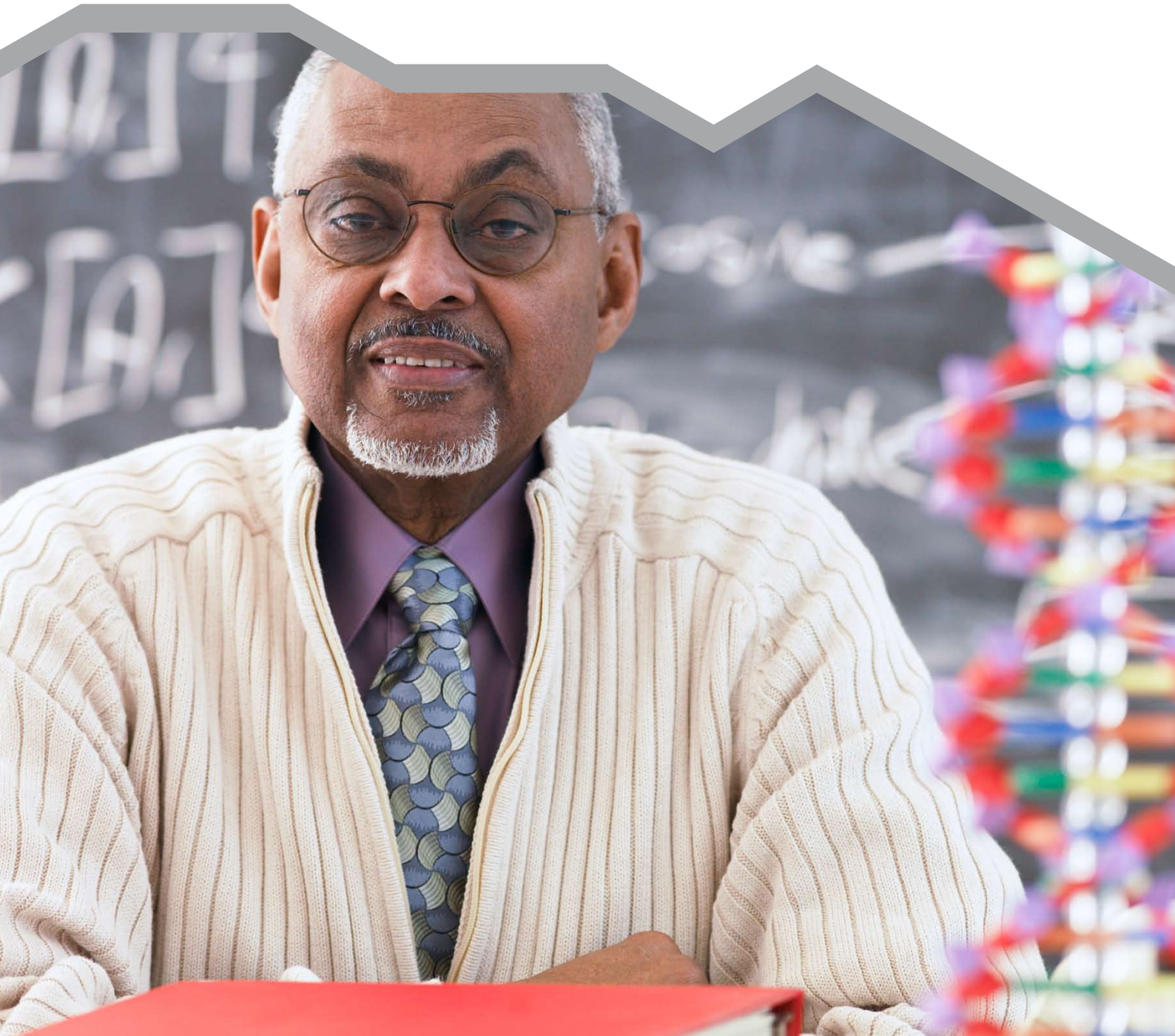




Home Office

**UK Border
Agency**

MOVING ON TOGETHER: GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING REFUGEES



Working with UK Border Agency to support refugee integration and resettlement



Department for
Innovation, Universities & Skills



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FOREWORD FROM MEG HILLIER MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office



The UK Border Agency has undergone the biggest shake up in a generation of our immigration system and border security as we have embarked on *securing our border and controlling migration for the benefit of the country*. Included in this overhaul was the move to establishment of a single caseowner managing an applicant's case throughout the process. We now have an improved grip on asylum applications with quicker case conclusions and a system that is more receptive to the circumstances of the individuals passing through it.

We recognise, however, that during this process our work helping refugees after they have been granted the right to stay in the UK has not often been in the foreground. That is why I particularly welcome this opportunity today to restate Government's commitment to supporting refugees through publication of this strategy – the next step in our ongoing commitment to be fair to refugees and support their integration and resettlement.

The UK has a proud tradition of helping those who need our protection. Since we published our last refugee integration strategy *Integration Matters*, there have been many achievements that demonstrate how this tradition continues in strength. These include the UK-wide refugee integration and employment service and expansion of the Gateway Protection Programme. I also acknowledge the sustained and vital work at all levels of the voluntary sector, to individuals in host communities supporting their refugee neighbours.

We recognise that integration is complex and the needs of refugees are varied and proper support is often critical in the early days following grant of refugee status. Yet we are also convinced that, for those that are able, learning to speak English and finding a job at the earliest opportunity are crucial steps in achieving longer term goals including the attainment of citizenship - which for many refugees will be regarded as a “full integration” outcome. The new refugee integration and employment service is designed to improve the chances of new refugees getting work.

We believe it to be fair and right that refugees, along with other migrants on the path to citizenship, share the values that can help bind communities together. That is why we expect those granted protection in the UK to learn English, obey the law and contribute to the community. In this way we can reinforce a fair deal for citizenship, ensuring that the public fully understands and welcomes our responsibilities to offer protection to those fleeing persecution.

Refugees have specific needs and it is right to provide tailored support to enable them to access mainstream services on an equal footing with the rest of the population. It is also essential that policies and practices affecting refugees support wider community cohesion initiatives.

Through this strategy, the government is announcing a fresh commitment to work so that the specific needs of refugees are understood and wherever possible taken into account in shaping programmes affecting the wider population.

In particular the UK Border Agency will work closely with colleagues in Communities and Local Government in its cross-government coordinating role and to help promote integration and community cohesion.

Much has been achieved and there are many areas where we want to accomplish still more and recognise that this can only be achieved by coordination of resources and sharing of accountability – by refugees, host communities, voluntary sector, private sector, local government and across central government.

I am delighted that through publication of this strategy a fresh commitment to the specific needs of refugees has been endorsed - and in particular that the government and the voluntary sector will lead together as we take the next steps in *Moving on together*.

May Hillier.

2. INTRODUCTION



Refugees bring skills, knowledge and diversity that offer a vital contribution to British life. In welcoming and supporting refugees it is essential that we do all we can to optimise that contribution. This includes provision of critical support immediately after grant of refugee status – advice on housing, health and access to benefits for example – and, crucially, identifying the skills of refugees at the earliest opportunity and providing the right support for getting a job.

It is vital therefore that we strengthen working relationships at all levels – national, regional and local – in order that all those who can contribute work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for refugees.

As Meg Hillier has said in her foreword, there is fresh commitment across government to ensure that specific needs of refugees are, wherever possible, reflected as policy and programmes evolve. It is equally essential that all providers of services to refugees, particularly those in the voluntary sector, continue to work together to optimise their knowledge, experience and resources. As part of this refreshed strategy for supporting refugees, the British Refugee Council is taking a joint lead role in coordinating and disseminating best practice – an exciting and welcome early demonstration of what *Moving on together* is all about.

The Refugee Council has been a strategic partner with UK Border Agency for the past decade and has played an invaluable role in bringing together

the views of the voluntary sector on the refugee and wider asylum agenda including coordinating views on the development of this strategy. Within the last year this partnership approach has been further strengthened through the Refugee Council / UK Border Agency joint chair of the National Asylum Stakeholder Forum and, most recently, supporting the UK government as it chairs the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement. One of UK Border Agency's roles as ATCR chair is to encourage more countries to start resettlement programmes of their own, focusing with UNHCR on the world's most vulnerable refugees. Joint lead of *Moving on together* is a natural development of this partnership between UK Border Agency and the Refugee Council.

The closer working on refugees does not of course mean that Refugee Council and UK Border Agency agree on all aspects of wider asylum matters. There remain strong differences of opinion on a number of issues not least when the work of integration should start but we are committed to continue working together to assist refugees to achieve their full potential.

We need also to be clear from the outset that resources remain constrained. It is therefore essential that policy makers, funders and providers work together to share best practice, identify workable solutions for closing gaps in provision, and have a joint understanding of areas that might be considered for development in the future to support refugee integration.

A key issue is the further development of Refugee Community Organisations, the main area within *Integration Matters* that it has not yet been possible to take forward. We acknowledge the vital role that Refugee Community Organisations play and are committed to developing proposals for sustaining their long term future.

In Section 4 of this strategy we celebrate the many achievements made over the last 4 years - fulfilling the key promises of *Integration Matters* and much more. Among these are the testing of the personal caseworker approach through the Sunrise pilot programme and subsequent UK-wide roll out of the Refugee Integration and Employment Service which offers all new refugees access to a standard level of support wherever they live, expansion of the Gateway Protection Programme which resettles some of the world's neediest refugees and delivery

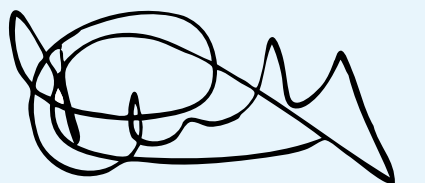
of the integration loan scheme to all those granted asylum and humanitarian protection.

In Section 5 we highlight what this joint re-commitment to refugees looks like now; and Section 6 explores the next steps that we will take to deliver that commitment on the ground.

It is essential that we support refugees in realising their full potential – economically, culturally and in terms of social inclusion. *Moving on together* is the next step in ensuring that refugees are properly supported and empowered to integrate into and contribute to British society. Working within the values and principles of the Compact, the government and voluntary sector are committed to bringing together all sectors at all levels – strengthening national, regional and local links – with refugees' voices heard throughout. That's how things get done.



Lin Homer
Chief Executive, UK Border Agency



Donna Covey
Chief Executive, Refugee Council

3. SETTING THE SCENE

What is this strategy about? Refugees

For the purposes of this document refugees are people who have been given protection by the UK government within the terms of the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and those granted Humanitarian Protection. This strategy is not intended to cover other migrant groups although many of the issues and solutions will be common. The strategy is not about asylum seekers.

Who is this strategy for? Everyone

This strategy is for those involved in planning policy, providing funding and delivering integration services benefitting refugees, refugees themselves and anyone interested in refugee issues.

Is this strategy UK-wide? No – England only

Refugee integration is a devolved matter and it is important to emphasise that this strategy formally applies to England only. The three devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales hold the view that integration for both asylum seekers and refugees begins from the day of arrival - and that is essential not only for the asylum seekers and refugees but also for the communities in which they live. Although there are differences of opinion, the devolved authorities and provider organisations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are key partners in identifying what works best for refugees and we will continue to work closely with them in planning and delivery.

What do we mean by integration?

There is no one agreed definition of integration, but for the purposes of this document we believe the one used in *Integration Matters* remains a valid starting point. Integration takes place when refugees are empowered to: meet their responsibilities and achieve their full potential as members of British Society, contribute to the community and access the services to which they are entitled. This applies

equally to those who come through the asylum route or are brought to the UK through our resettlement programmes.

How does our work with refugees fit within the Path to Citizenship?

As the UK Border Agency set out in the Path to Citizenship, published in February 2008, refugees are one of the three groups of migrant eligible to complete a journey to citizenship. We made absolutely clear our commitment to honouring our long and proud tradition of providing a safe haven to those fleeing torture and persecution. We set out clearly how we will continue to provide protection to persons outside their country of nationality who can demonstrate they have a well-founded fear of persecution.

At the same time we are seeking to ensure that migrants, including refugees, completing the journey to citizenship understand and abide by our shared values. This means that refugees will continue to be required to learn English¹ and abide by the law. We also believe that refugees should play an active part in the community, as many currently do, to attain the quickest path to citizenship.

Anyone seeking permanent settlement or citizenship in the UK has to demonstrate knowledge of life in the UK as well as a specified level of language competence – either through the short test based on the handbook *“Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship”*; or for those whose competence in English is below English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Entry 3 level, through the alternative ESOL course that incorporates learning materials about life in the UK. Refugees need to meet these requirements and are given support to enable them to do so.

1 The legal framework for this is in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Section 1 of this Act requires applicants for British citizenship to demonstrate that they have sufficient understanding of English (or Welsh or Scottish Gaelic) and a sufficient knowledge of life in the United Kingdom

UK Border Agency has emphasised that in view of the special circumstances that lead refugees to come to the UK and seek our protection, it is only right that, once we have granted refugee status, they should have full access to benefits and services. And, under UK Border Agency's existing arrangements, refugees are not charged for immigration applications. There are no plans to charge refugees progressing through the proposed Path to Citizenship arrangements and any future proposed changes would be given very careful consideration.

The Path to Citizenship will be implemented by the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill, which is currently going through Parliament. We expect that this bill will receive Royal Assent in summer 2009.

How does our work with refugees support the wider objectives of Communities and Local Government (CLG)?

UK Border Agency's work supports the wider responsibilities and objectives of CLG which takes the strategic lead across Government supporting strong and accountable local government delivering efficient, high quality services. Key departmental priorities include building cohesion, tackling extremism, increasing community empowerment, helping councils deal with the impact of the economic downturn and improving the quality of housing and the local environment.

CLG leads on Public Service Agreement 21: to build more cohesive, empowered and active communities. An important element of this is managing the impact of migration on local communities, helping defuse tensions, and promoting real interaction and civic participation. UK Border Agency supports all aspects of community cohesion including the Government's strategy of preventing violent extremism, enabling refugees to understand our society and make a full, responsible contribution to it. This not only recognises the vulnerability of refugees and seeks to provide support where it is most needed but also ensures that their displacement and any trauma of migration are

not exploited by those promoting radicalisation. CLG's broader work will therefore complement and support UK Border Agency's more targeted programme of support for refugees – particularly through UK Border Agency's flagship programmes, the Refugee Integration and Employment Service and the Gateway Protection Programme, covered later in this strategy.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS

In our last refugee integration strategy, *Integration Matters* published in 2005, a challenging programme of objectives was set out – and it is good to celebrate delivery of key programmes as promised. But of course the work on refugee integration and resettlement is a continuing journey and it is equally important to take this opportunity to highlight the range of achievements from across government and other sectors that have benefited refugees and the communities that they live in.

Sunrise (Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services) was piloted in London, Manchester, Leeds & Sheffield and Scotland from October 2005. Over three years Sunrise helped over 2500 refugees to address critical needs and move forward on their path to integration. Sunrise introduced a standard level of service provided by personal caseworkers working with the refugee towards integration goals through an agreed Personal Integration Plan.

The Sunrise pilot was invaluable in developing the Refugee Integration and Employment Service – emphasising the need for intensive assistance from the outset but also the benefits of separating the route to employment goals from the more critical short term needs. Sunrise also underlined the necessity of resources to establish and maintain partnerships with other delivery organisations – in particular around housing.

Employment through Sunrise

Two brothers, originally from Burma, arrived in the UK with good levels of English and equivalent GCSE qualifications. Sunrise assisted them in finding suitable accommodation and benefits to meet their immediate needs, and helped them to obtain funding for a plumbing course. The brothers completed the course, obtained certification, and are now employed as plumbers.

A major barrier experienced by Sunrise clients was a lack of UK employment experience. Refugee Action's Manchester pilot was supplemented by resources focused on employment issues. Work placements and Christmas casual posts with organisations such as the Royal Mail and 'mock interviews' were arranged. This proved to be a successful strategy with over 50% of individuals finding employment.

The impact of Sunrise has been monitored through a Survey of New Refugees. The results will be available later in 2009.

Integration loans: UK Border Agency launched the Integration Loan Scheme in June 2007 to enable refugees to buy goods and services to assist in their integration. The Scheme has proved successful. By the end of December 2008 we had loaned more than £500,000 to over 1,000 applicants. Of the loans granted, over 90% were used for housing, with the remainder for education and employment. Close working between UK Border Agency and Department for Work and Pensions enables the fast and safe payment of the loans to our applicants and a straightforward repayment process.

Time Together was pioneered by TimeBank in 2002 in response to a government white paper that recommended mentoring schemes to help refugees integrate in the UK and was initially funded through the European Refugee Fund. By 2006 TimeBank had expanded to 24 locations across the UK and by 2008 over 2000 refugees were matched with a volunteer mentor in order to facilitate their integration into UK society.

Independent evaluations concluded that Time Together had a positive impact on the integration of refugees in terms of achieving potential, contributing to the community and accessing services. The mentoring element of the Refugee Integration and Employment Service builds on the success of the Time Together model.

Michael and Faduma Time Together match - London

Michael, 44, Public Affairs Consultant
Getting to know Faduma has increased my awareness about the journey of refugees who are trying to start a new life in the UK. Mentoring Faduma has shown me that refugees are hardworking, intelligent people who desperately want to work. They are real people with real stories and real lives.

Faduma, 31, Mother and Student
I fled the civil war in Somalia in 2003 and I now live in London with my three year old son. Before I met Michael I was on the bottom step of a long ladder and I didn't know where to turn. I didn't know anything about the UK employment, education or cultural systems and the only people I knew were other Somalians in the same position as me.

Michael was great because he helped me to find and apply for a university course in human rights advocacy and development studies and to understand the best way to go about finding a job. Before I met him I felt afraid and thought people would look at me as just another refugee. But Michael helped me to get my confidence back so I felt able to engage with people in the UK and build a life for myself. The thing about integration is it's a two way street: I've learnt from Michael and he's learnt from me.

I now work part time for the Employability Forum on their Opening Doors for Refugee Teachers. I have also been awarded a Rayne Foundation Fellowship which has given me the opportunity to work as a researcher for a Member of Parliament.

GATEWAY PROTECTION PROGRAMME

The UK Border Agency is proud of its record in resettling vulnerable refugees to the UK and providing them with permanent protection and residence to enable them to achieve their full potential. Our strong partnership with UNHCR has identified refugees from refugee camps and urban areas from around the world who cannot remain where they are currently living and who are unable to return home in safety and dignity.

We have now operated the Gateway Programme for five years and have provided permanent protection to nearly 1800 refugees. Refugees resettled to the UK include Liberians from Guinea and Sierra

Leone, Congolese from Zambia and Uganda, Burmese from Thailand and Bangladesh, Sudanese from Uganda, Ethiopians from Kenya, Mauritians from Senegal and Iraqis from Jordan.

From the start of the programme we have seen a steady growth in support and participation of Local Authorities (LAs) and voluntary sector organisations. Many of the pioneering LAs participate year after year and have encouraged others to follow suit. The Programme has grown from two authorities in 2004 to fifteen across the UK in 2009. This long standing commitment to Gateway has built up expertise and best practice in the regions which in turn benefits newly participating LAs.

“The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is grateful for the commitment shown by the Government and communities across the UK in participating in resettlement, and hopes that “Moving on together” will help to inspire others to join this vital refugee protection effort. Globally, the number of refugees estimated to be in need of resettlement stands at some 560,000 people. As the current in-take capacity of resettlement states stands at only 12.5 per cent of the global need, or only about 70,000 places annually, UNHCR hopes that more countries join the UK and other states in providing resettlement, and more communities come forward to welcome the world’s neediest refugees.”

**Vincent Cochetel, Deputy Director,
Division of International Protection Services/
Head of Resettlement Service UNHCR**

After spending 12 years living in a Thai refugee camp, Pearl, from Burma, was resettled in Greater Manchester in December 2007.

Since she arrived, Pearl - a single mother to two daughters – has become a volunteer teaching assistant and then worked as a bilingual support teacher with Burmese refugees. She is currently taking English classes and plans to retrain in the future. She said: “My job has just ended as the project came to an end, but I am planning to retrain in teaching or in nursing and to also get another part-time job. My daughters are doing very well, they really enjoy school.”

Photo: Claudia Janke



Refugee Action and Refugee Council have together published the **Gateway Protection Programme Good Practice Guide**. The guide is built on practitioners' own experience and illustrated with real-life examples of how refugees from many different countries of origin have been successfully resettled and integrated in the UK. It has already proved an invaluable resource to those setting up Gateway services for the first time.

Jon Lord, Head of Bolton Community Homes, Bolton Council says: "Gateway is a prime example of national government working in partnership with local government to fulfil their humanitarian role – and the voluntary and community sector play a key role in ensuring these newly arrived refugees are supported effectively. These outcomes are rarely achieved without partnership with each other."

Kassech Shiferaw fled Ethiopia in 1993 and spent 13 years living in a refugee camp where she taught secondary school students. She was resettled to the UK in 2006.

On arrival she studied English intensively for 6 months then began volunteering with Bury Council in the Safeguarding Children's Team. Less than a year later she secured a full time job as an Induction Support Assistant at the

Starting Point Programme in Bolton. She now assists new international arrivals to Bolton by preparing children from around the world for a smooth transition into mainstream schools and supporting new families in integrating into the community. Kassech said that "coming to England has been beyond my imagination. I am very happy here. I love working with the children and I love helping them and seeing them gain their confidence and going out to new schools."

Photo: Starting Point



Re-directing UK Border Agency funding:

Following a public consultation in 2006 the UK Border Agency concluded that a radical change was needed in the way it funded refugee integration services in England.

Previous funding arrangements had contributed considerably to the innovation, diversity and good practice across the country but the availability of services was inconsistent and depended on where a refugee was living when granted asylum. So UK Border Agency redirected funding to provide all new refugees a standard level of integration support wherever they live – and you can read about the subsequent development of the Refugee Integration and Employment Service later in this strategy.

Through this change of direction the UK Border Agency recognised the need for a continued relationship with those organisations regarded by the Government as key partners by virtue of their representational and policy co-ordinating roles at regional and national level. On 1 April 2008, the UK Border Agency introduced strategic funding arrangements with the British, Scottish and Welsh Refugee Councils.

European Refugee Fund: The second phase of the European Refugee Fund (ERF) was introduced in 2005 and for the first time provided multi-annual funding, thereby allowing the longer term planning of refugee projects. A wide range of projects were funded in the areas of housing, financial management, employment and raising the awareness in local communities of asylum and refugee related issues.

UnLtd – supporting social entrepreneurs

Under ERF II, UnLtd provided funding and personal development support to refugees - involving business planning, fund-raising, project development, networking, 1:1 coaching, mentoring and facilitating links between refugee communities and mainstream services. By the end of the project refugees were enabled to set up their own community projects and deliver essential support services.

Peggy Mulongo - has opened Karibou Store ensuring that high quality, affordable Afro-Caribbean products are supplied within the borough of Rochdale. Peggy attracted £16,000 of funding and has established a shop on 2 floors providing food, clothes and hair products. The long term objective is to develop a resource centre to benefit the community and the vision is to be a major store, community resource centre, social enterprise incubation centre and a place where people will feel supported, orientated and welcomed within Rochdale.

Peggy employs staff from the African refugee community as well as receiving volunteers who help with the running of the shop and marketing to approximately 300 members of the African community. Peggy has not only learnt about starting and developing her own business but is also supporting the development of three local social enterprises to supply her shop. These social enterprises will also provide employment for refugee women in Rochdale.

THRIVING, SUSTAINABLE, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

In June 2008, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published “Managing the Impacts of Migration: a Cross-Government Approach”. This plan seeks to ensure a co-ordinated approach maximising the benefits while managing the impacts of migration at a local level. This includes work around delivering public services effectively and fairly, managing the impact of migration on community cohesion, helping new migrants to become part of their communities and highlighting the role of migration in improving economic performance of our cities, towns and regions. An update on progress was published in March 2009.

CLG’s work is wide-ranging and targeted towards managing the local impact of *all* migrant groups, yet includes recognition of the specific challenges that may be associated with the effective integration of refugee groups. Achievements include:

- A **single online portal** through the Institute for Community Cohesion to give Local Authorities (LAs) easy access to the latest good practice on promoting cohesion
- Provided some **£50m** for 2008-2011 to promote community cohesion, in LAs, schools and communities
- Working closely with the Office for National Statistics to **improve population and migration statistics**, including those at the local level
- In 2007/08 LAs spent over £11m of their **Supporting People** grants on housing services for over 2,500 refugees

Refugee Action set up the **Refugee Awareness Project (RAP)** in July 2005 to bring the reality of life as a refugee to local people and increase understanding between newcomers and established residents. RAP trained 118 refugee, asylum seeker and British volunteers to listen to the genuine concerns of local community groups and talk honestly to them about life as a refugee. They were supported by high quality materials including handy myth busting booklets.

The project delivered workshops and talks to more than 10,500 people – and 95% of participants said they were better informed afterwards. RAP reached a further 12,000 people through arts based awareness events and outreach stands. Many of these people have since taken practical actions including raising awareness in their neighbourhood.

HELPING REFUGEES INTO WORK

Refugees have full employment rights and are eligible for the full range of Jobcentre programmes and support. They are one of several groups that Jobcentre Plus recognise as disadvantaged in the labour market and which have voluntary access to available New Deal from the start of their Job Seeker Allowance claim.

During the development and delivery of Sunrise, Gateway and most recently the Refugee Integration and Employment Service, Jobcentre Plus has played a vital partnership role in facilitating smooth access of refugees to Jobcentre Plus support – strategically, regionally and locally through Jobcentre managers.

Jobcentre Plus staff keep fully up to date with refugee employment issues through the Refugee Operational Framework which brings together the latest information, guidance and support for staff to identify and address the key issues facing refugees seeking employment and claiming benefits.

Refugee Support opened The Station Foyer in Sheffield in 2005 - the country's first dedicated 'refugee foyer' linking housing with education, training and employment services and with an emphasis on integration into the local community. The Station Foyer is accredited with the Foyer Federation and helps refugees, aged 18 – 35, to integrate through raising their levels of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities.

Residents are encouraged to find out more about the local community and take up volunteering opportunities with the help of a community initiative officer. A careers advice officer also works with residents on their future education, training and employment plans. In addition, young people are encouraged to attend informal ESOL classes within the Foyer, as well as accessing other ESOL provision with other providers.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Since 2001, the Learning and Skills Council has funded a threefold increase in ESOL provision. That funding has supported over 2 million learners to improve their skills, among them many refugees.

Kaiwan, from central Iraq, was just 16 years old when he arrived in England in 2001, having been persecuted and imprisoned in his own country. Unable to speak a single word of English was isolating for Kaiwan. He said, "I couldn't even buy a loaf of bread." But Kaiwan's determination in learning ESOL at Peterborough Regional College has paid off. He has had several jobs and now works as a lorry driver. He said, "Learning makes a big difference in your life. Without English, I'd be lost."

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Department for Children, Schools and Families fund the Employability Forum's 'Opening Doors for Refugees Working in Education' which helps refugees find employment in schools and colleges in England. £1m of funding over 4 years commenced in 2007-08 and the project's achievements include:

- Courses which develop refugees' skills for working in support roles in schools
- Job brokerage to support job ready clients
- The creation of a regional hub in London to share experiences, highlight provision gaps and develop joint initiatives
- Publication of a guide for refugee teachers.

HEALTH

The Assist primary care service in Leicester works closely with the statutory and voluntary sector to ensure effective referrals for its patients. Refugees are only transferred on to other GP practices when they have settled into permanent housing and are well. In tandem with the Leicester Common Mental Health Problems Service, and through a combination of therapeutic approaches, most patients now have their mental health needs effectively met in primary care. Reducing isolation and increasing social engagement is a key aspect of the practice's mental health care.

A new website, The Integration of Refugees: Good Practice for Health Professionals, has been launched – providing information, guidance and examples of good practice to support the integration of refugee families. The website can be found at <http://refugeeintegration.homeoffice.gov.uk/health/>

NATIONAL REFUGEE FORUMS

Finally, as we look back, we should not forget the invaluable work of the National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF) in maintaining the profile of refugees and, in particular, formulating *Integration Matters* which subsequently achieved so much. The role of the NRIF has now been incorporated into the National Asylum Stakeholder Forum and its Operational Forum – and refugee issues continue to be discussed and progressed under the joint chair of UK Border Agency and Refugee Council.

5. COMMITMENT

As the last section of this strategy demonstrated, much has been achieved since 2005. But as important as it is to celebrate those achievements it is equally important to maintain momentum. Our commitment to refugees is as strong as ever and the following section shows what we are already doing and where we will go next.

REFUGEE INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (RIES)

RIES is a national service which ensures that new refugees can benefit from a standard level of integration support wherever they live and aims to get 30% of refugees into work within a year. The service recognises that the transition from asylum seeker to refugee is a difficult one and provides practical help in the very early stages of integration with housing, education and benefits. Over the longer term the service focuses particularly on employment as a key driver to successful integration – empowering individuals to contribute to the community on their path to citizenship.

Photo: Refugee Action



RIES consists of three complementary components:

- an **advice and support** service where a case manager works with the refugee to agree and review integration goals
- an **employment advice** service focused on achieving job readiness and sustained employment – complementing Jobcentre Plus programmes and services; and
- a **mentoring** service offering refugees the opportunity to be matched with a mentor. The specification for this was based on the Time Together mentoring framework

The service is available for a maximum of 12 months and is available to those granted refugee status and humanitarian protection who are over 18 and whose claim has been handled by the UK Border Agency's regional asylum teams.

RIES is delivered throughout the UK via 12 regional contracts with a mix of voluntary sector and Local Authority (LA) organisations. For the first time in the delivery of refugee integration activity funded by UK Border Agency, partnerships and subcontracting arrangements between the voluntary and private sector have been established. UK Border Agency is committed to delivering the service for the next three years.

We want to ensure that refugees living in rural areas have full access to RIES and providers are adopting various approaches to ensure that such refugees do not feel isolated. These include outreach - through access to satellite offices and mobile working by case managers - and commissioning of mentors and volunteers living close to the refugee.

After just four months of operation the signs of what RIES can achieve are beginning to emerge:

- In West Midlands, 20% of the October cohort of refugees in work and RIES actively involved in employer engagement events
- In the North East, close working relationship with the regional Refugee Forum and developing housing solutions with Sunderland LA
- In the North West, RIES delivering training sessions to hostel staff across Greater Manchester on issues new refugees face, and RCOs supporting the main provider by helping vulnerable clients to access mainstream services
- In the East of England a service agreement between RIES and Jobcentre Plus
- In the South West – RIES delivering training sessions to Bristol Business in The Community
- In Yorkshire and Humberside, a 98% take up of the service and eleven refugees matched with mentors

RIES – housing: Responding to the lessons learned from their report *insights into the Sunrise refugee housing experience* the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact) are working with the Refugee Council to improve the difficulties faced by refugees in accessing and maintaining housing solutions. They are supporting RIES refugees by working with key stakeholders to improve access of refugees to housing, helping stakeholders to improve housing opportunities and identifying and sharing good practice across other regions.

RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES

Ministers have demonstrated their clear commitment to refugee protection by increasing the annual quota for refugee resettlement under the Gateway Protection Programme from 500 to 750 refugees in 2008/09. UK Border Agency will continue to work closely with UNHCR, Local Authorities (LAs) and the voluntary sector to ensure that vulnerable refugees benefit from our protection now and in years to come.

The resettlement of refugees under Gateway has continued to grow since the first refugees were housed in Sheffield in 2004. Research during those first years² identified areas for improvement which are now firmly bedded into the programme. UK Border Agency now operates Gateway successfully in 15 LAs across the UK, and we are working closely with a number of new LAs to enable them to participate in the near future.

A cornerstone of Gateway's success is the integration package received by new arrivals during their first 12 months in the UK. Individuals' urgent needs are dealt with on arrival and support continues through caseworkers who will assist new arrivals in accessing local services, advise them about their rights and responsibilities in the UK and help them enrol on English language courses. Casework support focuses on re-accreditation and re-training as well as building up the skills to apply for a job.

The UK remains committed to the international strategic use of resettlement. Each year we focus on resettling refugees from areas of the world of particular concern to UNHCR. The UK is the Chair of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement 2008/09. Through this international forum we bring together States, UNHCR and Non Governmental Organisations, promoting

Akoi Bazzie, from Liberia, was in the first refugee group to be resettled in the UK under the Gateway programme.

Akoi fled Liberia when he was 14 and spent 12 years in a refugee camp in Guinea before being resettled to Sheffield in March 2004. He studied full time at College to improve his spoken and written English, then volunteered for several refugee organisations before securing a full time job with Refugee Council as their Community Development Worker for resettled refugees. He is also studying Community Development at the University of Sheffield.

In December 2007, Akoi was invited by the United Nations to address the 2008 Humanitarian Appeal Launch in Geneva and has since represented the UK resettlement at international meetings in Paris, as well as speaking to new Local Authorities to raise awareness about the backgrounds of refugees. New Gateway arrivals continue to benefit from his advice and support as their Community Development worker in the city and he remains active with the Liberian Community Organisation in Sheffield which he established. He and his wife Rose were recently nominated for a City of Sanctuary award for their contribution to the City of Sheffield.

Photo: Pierre-Michel Viot



² Home Office Research Report 12 (2009) - The Gateway Protection Programme: an evaluation

international partnership on resettlement. The UK's theme is the integration of resettled refugees, with a key focus on employment and refugees' contribution to their local community. We are also strongly advocating for other EU member states to establish resettlement programmes of their own. By broadening the base of refugee resettlement internationally we will ultimately enable more refugees from around the world to benefit from permanent protection.

Action in Communities became the first church-based organisation to pilot the **Private Church Group Sponsorship** scheme entitled a 'New Neighbour programme' in 2008. The New Neighbour programme is piloted through established church networks after consultation with church leaders, other community organisations and statutory agencies. Volunteers are trained in resettlement support and provide assistance to newly arrived families in Bromley and Colchester. Early indications are positive and we aim to expand this model across England.

OUR COMMITMENT TO IRAQI STAFF

In October 2007, the Foreign Secretary pledged assistance to Iraqi staff working for the Government's armed forces and civilian missions. Staff choosing to resettle in the UK are provided with a reception and integration package and advice on employment.

Staff and their families are integrating well into the UK. Many are actively contributing to the local community through volunteering activities.

From Baghdad to Glasgow

Hassan Abdulh Hadi Heshmat who worked at the British Council in Baghdad said "the scheme came like a rescue boat for me; it was like the light at the end of the tunnel."

"When we arrived at London Heathrow, we got a warm welcome by Home Office, FCO and British Council colleagues and on arrival in Glasgow we really appreciated the support of the Glasgow City Council team. Periodic follow up visits engendered a strong feeling of appreciation and importance that we were not being abandoned or neglected. All these people are only a small part of the kind and wonderful people that I've met here in Glasgow."

"After 6 months in Glasgow, I'm very close to realising my dream in London, and work as a registered dentist, while my wife is pursuing her medical genetics masters degree. It really feels strange when suddenly a man can plan for the future. The resettlement scheme offered my family the chance for a better, secure life and education."



WIDER COMMITMENT

The **European Refugee Fund (ERF)** is administered by the European Commission in Brussels with the UK Border Agency acting as the national agency for the UK. Under its third phase, ERF III will provide funding for refugee integration projects and for UK Border Agency's Gateway Protection Programme.

Most ERF III projects are aimed at either getting refugees into jobs or developing Refugee Community Organisations.

The Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (hact) has received funding for a project working with the Refugee Integration and Employment Services (RIES). **The Reach In** project aims to effect greater refugee integration and engagement in civic life by building links and partnerships between Refugee Community Organisations, RIES contractors, housing associations and local authorities. Support is provided to develop the partnerships, and housing training and placement opportunities will result in improved housing and employment outcomes.

Integration loan scheme - We are currently reviewing the scheme to ensure that the loans continue to meet refugees' needs and that the administration of the applications remains efficient.

National Asylum Stakeholder Forum –

NASF is a bi-monthly stakeholder forum jointly chaired by UK Border Agency and the Refugee Council. Over 40 voluntary sector and other government department stakeholder organisations come together to discuss key asylum related policy and strategy. The forum provides an opportunity to further develop refugee services and many of the stakeholders have contributed to the successful development of this strategy. An operational forum will be established in April 2009.

Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships -

UKBA has invested £1.5 million to manage and support a network of Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships (RSMPs) with a remit to provide a forum for discussion with local communities. RSMPs co-ordinate issues affecting migrants within each region by bringing together representatives of public services and other agencies to discuss migration issues. The RSMPs have a clear role in ensuring that migration issues are part of wider local plans and strategies.

Within this wider remit, the RSMPs have an essential role in ensuring that refugee issues are part of their wider consideration and planning - and for instance each of the regional RIES providers are expected to work cooperatively and within the framework of the respective RSMP agenda.

Here are some examples of how RSMPs are demonstrating their commitment to refugees:

- Yorkshire & Humberside, supported financially by its Regional Development Agency Yorkshire Forward, were the first Partnership to publish and implement a refugee integration strategy. They consulted on a new version early in 2009
- West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP) published a "Regional Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Refugees and Asylum Seekers" in 2005. WMSMP is now concluding a review of this Strategy - having undertaken a detailed consultation process, including refugees themselves.
- South East Strategic Partnership for Migration provides the link for Refugee Week and its associated planned activity for the South East region
- The East of England RSMP has developed a refugee integration guide for the region's multi-agency fora. The RSMP also acts as an advisory body to the Refugee Integration and Employment Service in the East of England

With effect from 26 February 2009 the Mayor of London's Board for Refugee Integration for London will formally be replaced by the London Strategic Migration Partnership under the chair of the Statutory Deputy Mayor, Richard Barnes. In spring 2009 the Mayor will launch the Refugee Integration Strategy for London. This 3 year Strategy will be reviewed annually, developing its work with refugees and asylum seekers and incorporating new actions for migrants. The UK Border Agency and Greater London Authority (GLA) are committed to working together as they take forward their respective national and regional strategies.

The strategies have a number of common themes: acknowledgement that mainstream services cater for the needs of refugees; the importance of joint working and sharing best practice; equality for refugees, empowering them to play a full part in life in their community in which they live; the need for refugee and practitioner voices to be heard and fed into the RSMP and informing local strategic partnerships and local area agreements.

UK Border Agency and the GLA are committed to sharing emerging data and best practice in order that all refugees across the United Kingdom can benefit.

OUR COMMITMENT TO REFUGEE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS (RCOs)

RCOs play a pivotal role in encouraging and empowering refugees to engage actively within their communities and it is important that those developing policies and delivering programmes are plugged in to the wealth of advice and experience that RCOs can contribute. We have emphasised elsewhere within this strategy that there is no funding to take forward new initiatives but the UK Border Agency is committed to work with Refugee Council and across government to identify cost neutral measures that can further develop and empower RCOs to contribute in local planning.

MARCO – Migrants, Asylum, Refugee, Community Organisation in Barnsley is staffed entirely by volunteers and provides a relaxed environment for new refugees to meet with other migrants and the local community. MARCO provides a range of support including volunteering advice and facilitating events where young refugees share experiences with longer term residents. MARCO has also produced a booklet to help the Barnsley community understand the circumstances which new refugees face and takes an active role in the Multi Agency Panel on Community Safety.

The Basis project is delivered by Refugee Council in partnership with Refugee Action. The five year project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund under their BASIS programme, which focuses on delivering specialist infrastructure support for the voluntary and community sector.

The project is delivering customised support and training for RCOs and second-tier infrastructure organisations in each of the nine English regions. There are twelve support workers based across the nine English regions, who are providing one to one advisory support and group training in

core skills of fundraising, financial management, governance and project development.

Support to RCOs is provided in a variety of ways depending on the RCO's needs. This includes the use of: information products and toolkits; one to one support; group training; networking; peer support; seminars and events. The project team is providing intensive capacity building support for up to 450 RCOs in five years. The team will provide a consistent service across the country, complementing existing support in these nine regions.

THRIVING, SUSTAINABLE, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Communities and Local Government (CLG) is working across government to help manage the local impacts of migration, including the specific impacts of refugees. CLG welcomes the existence of a targeted strategy which recognises the particular support needed by refugees.

Community Cohesion: Cohesion is something that can only be built locally. CLG's role is to provide guidance, targeted support and a resource framework to the Local Authorities (LAs) and their partners who will deliver cohesion on the ground. CLG's Cohesion Delivery Framework will give local practitioners the tools to meet the challenges they face.

Local areas have undertaken a range of projects with refugees to help them to integrate and

interact with existing residents, helping both to understand one another better. These include mentoring, work experience and training, volunteering and shared activities such as sporting or cultural events. CLG wants LAs to continue such initiatives, but their guidance will emphasise the need for interaction to arise naturally out of the activities people undertake, rather than being a pre-determined goal.

From April 2009, **Supporting People** will be allocated to LAs on a more flexible basis allowing LAs to come up with new and innovative ways to support vulnerable people - including refugees. LAs' performance in delivering housing support will be measured through the new Comprehensive Area Assessments, and through National Indicators 141 and 142 in the slimmed-down national performance framework.

The Canopy Housing Project in Beeston, Leeds, has brought ten empty properties back into use to house refugees. Under the wider Accommodate programme, this partnership initiative enabled Canopy Housing to successfully extend its community based approach to create quality homes from disused properties, while

empowering refugees and local volunteers. This provided a powerful model of community cohesion in action, and homes for young refugees and refugee families as refugees and local people worked together to refurbish the houses. The partnership also provided office space for newly established RCOs.

Photo: Paula Solloway



HELPING REFUGEES INTO WORK

As refugees have a significant disadvantage in the labour market, the Jobcentre Plus adviser may suggest that a refugee moves immediately into a period of intensive Jobcentre Plus support with job search, where they feel that the customer would be unable to move into work quickly without it.

In April 2009, Department for Work and Pensions will roll out a new programme of support for unemployed people, replacing the two current New Deals with a new Flexible New Deal which provides a mandatory programme of employment support for customers of all ages from 12 months of unemployment and lasting for 12 months. Customers who have moved into intensive earlier job search support will move into the Flexible New Deal at six months of unemployment.

In carrying out employment assessments and providing the employment element of the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES), providers are working closely with Jobcentre Plus staff to ensure refugees access programmes tailored for their particular needs in order that employment can be secured at the earliest opportunity.

And Jobcentre Plus continues to provide a local single point of contact enabling Gateway refugees to access their entitled benefits from one location.

The Refugee New Arrivals Project (RNAP) in Sheffield helps refugees access ESOL classes and provides a range of advice, guidance and support to help refugees into employment. RNAP supports the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Migration Partnership in delivering the Refugee Integration and Employment Service through South Yorkshire. RNAP has also developed a set of activities specifically designed to help refugees from professional backgrounds improve their employability.

Employers remain a key group of stakeholders. Jobcentre Plus, RIES and Gateway are engaging with employers to meet local and regional recruitment needs. Refugees who are qualified professionals will often require longer term training plans to requalify in the UK. There are now national programmes supporting refugee health and teaching professionals and many examples of good practice in other areas.

WORKING WITH HMRC

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are responsible for tax credits and Child Benefit. HMRC and UK Border Agency are working together to establish the most effective way of managing those specific issues faced by refugees. This will include determining how best to represent refugee specific issues on relevant HMRC external stakeholder groups and consultation events.

HEALTH

Refugees are entitled to NHS treatment without charge. In England Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), in consultation with Strategic Health Authorities, NHS Trusts and local stakeholders determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. PCTs should demonstrate that they have taken account of different needs and inequalities within the local population. This will include the needs of refugees. Work is also underway to strengthen health input to Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships, with the Department of Health providing seed funding to Government Offices to undertake scoping work on asylum, refugee and migrant health and to set in place structures such as cross regional health sub groups under the wider partnership arrangements.

ARRIVE

Jointly funded by the European Refugee Fund, Strategic Health Authorities and UK Border Agency, the ARRIVE project is led by NHS Employers and sits within the Refugee Healthcare Professionals Programme (RHPP). ARRIVE takes a co-ordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of services to support refugee healthcare professionals back into employment. The RHPP is made up of: Building Bridges London, Building Bridges West Midlands, REACHE North West and Refugee Healthcare Professionals North East.

ARRIVE handles referrals from the Refugee Integration and Employment Service and other organisations - providing a signposting and information telephone service, personal development planning courses, workshops on transferable skills within the NHS for those exploring alternative career options, and work placement opportunities.

It is ARRIVE and the RHPP's vision that employers within the NHS play a proactive role in supporting the training and employment of refugee healthcare professionals. ARRIVE will promote employer engagement and coordinate the involvement of NHS organisations across the country to inform future funding and delivery.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Many people who come to the UK as refugees face a range of barriers to joining the labour market including lack of English skills or vocational qualifications. Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) currently spends around £300 million each year on provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Although ESOL is not automatically free, fee remission is available to all those who receive income related benefits or Job Seekers allowance.

Following a public consultation in 2008, DIUS are implementing a new approach to ESOL. DIUS will be working with the Learning and Skills Council, Local Authorities, learning providers and other local partners to better focus provision on outcomes that support community cohesion. At local level, partners will identify priority groups and inform the provision required to meet needs. We expect that among the top priorities for provision will be those people who have secured the right to settle and build a life in the UK, including refugees and others granted humanitarian protection.

The ESOL offer will be more responsive to the needs of priority learners and integrated with other support such as the Integrated Employment and Skills Service, the Employability Skills Programme for Jobcentre Plus customers and Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes.

NIACE is delivering **A Woman's Place** – a project across three London boroughs where people will be employed to provide ESOL to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali women supporting them into adult learning. The project will develop approaches to engage women into the wider community and build on their skills, ultimately leading to sustainable support networks and accessible learning for this group.

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Local Authorities (LAs) have a legal duty to ensure that education is available for **all** children of compulsory school age. Refugees may speak little or no English, and government policy is to encourage rapid English language acquisition, to assist with a pupil's successful integration into education and the wider community.

The **National Strategies** (an experienced field workforce) work with LAs to support practitioners, schools and other educational settings to raise standards for all pupils and close attainment gaps through school improvement. Various targeted programmes are available to pupils, including refugees, with English as Additional Language (EAL).

Grants focused on refugees: Schools receive funding for children of refugees in the same way as they do for all children. LAs also receive Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding to provide support for minority ethnic pupils and pupils with EAL, who are at risk of underachieving.

Together with UK Border Agency's allocation of match funding from the European Refugee Fund, the Training & Development Agency for Schools, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, will provide a grant for the next 3 years to the Refugee Council's 'Refugees into Teaching' project – providing assistance to refugee clients applying to join the school workforce.

National Curriculum and refugees: The National Curriculum offers flexibility to reflect the needs of all pupils, regardless of background. A wealth of resources are available, including the 'Respect for

All' website, which provide ideas and guidance on how schools can value diversity in the curriculum.

The programmes of study for history, geography and citizenship particularly, present opportunities for learning about the experiences of refugees, the causes and consequences of people becoming refugees and the impact of refugee groups in their host communities. Through Citizenship education, pupils learn how democracy, justice, diversity, tolerance, respect and freedom are valued by people from various backgrounds.

Community Cohesion in schools: Under the statutory duty placed on them by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which Ofsted began to inspect in September 2008, schools have a key role to play in building a fair, integrated and cohesive society by giving children the skills, knowledge and opportunities to learn with, from and about those from different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds.

Children granted refugee status

The UK Border Agency is committed to the principle that every child matters, regardless of their immigration status, and is committed to dealing sensitively with the children with whom it comes into contact. In January 2009 we introduced a Code of Practice for Children that requires UK Border Agency staff and contractors to be responsive to the needs of children, and to be vigilant on behalf of children for any indications that they might be at risk of harm and therefore need to be referred to the relevant statutory child protection body.

These reforms complement other changes we are introducing for children in the immigration system. We are currently talking to a number of Local Authorities (LAs) interested in becoming "specialists" in the support of unaccompanied asylum seeking children ensuring they receive high quality care that is properly tailored to their very particular needs.

The UK Border Agency is committed to ensuring that the immigration status of these children is resolved much more quickly than in the past, so that LA pathway planning can be properly aligned to immigration status – with those who gain refugee status given the necessary help to integrate within the United Kingdom.

Peacemakers in Oldham has been funded by the European Refugee Fund for a three year project that will support refugees including children and young people in Manchester. The overall aims are to: support children and young people to build positive relationships with their peers from host communities; work with them

in host communities to develop an appreciation of refugee children and young people; create opportunities for children and young people from both communities to work together and to train local service providers to better understand the needs of refugee communities and incorporate these needs into the mainstream activities.

REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

Although the responsibility for refugee integration is a devolved matter, the UK Border Agency works closely with its partners in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – across the official, voluntary and Local Authority sectors.

Three significant examples demonstrate this. With the agreement of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations, the UK Border Agency funds and manages the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) - delivered across these nations to the same specification as the rest of the UK. Secondly, with the help of all sectors, some of the most vulnerable refugees have been resettled in North Lanarkshire through the Gateway Protection Programme and under a separate programme Iraqi staff have been resettled in Glasgow. And in recognition of their leadership and coordinating roles among the voluntary sector, the UK Border Agency continues to provide strategic funding to the Scottish and Welsh Refugee Councils.

In June 2008, The Welsh Assembly Government launched its Refugee Inclusion Strategy – part of its vision of a prosperous future for Wales that is free from racism and discrimination, where everyone is enabled to fulfil their potential, to have fair and equal access to services and participate fully in the political and civil life of the country. The Strategy provides a clear strategic framework for all those working towards refugee inclusion in Wales and co-ordinates the work of the Welsh Assembly Government and its partner organisations to maximise impact and resources.

By engaging with schools and community groups the **Welsh Refugee Council (WRC)** found a wide level of 'myth' about asylum seekers and refugees. They will develop this area of work so that people are better informed and aware of the reality of the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. WRC are also developing work with employers so they realise the potential that refugees can have within their work force. As part of the work of Refugee Week, last year WRC with a range of partners produced a booklet on encounters between refugees and non refugees in Wales which has been very positively received by both communities.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to working with service providers to realise the vision of refugee inclusion in Wales and the RIES supports the implementation of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy as it enables service users achieve integration through the partnership of mainstream and specialist organisations sharing resources and expertise.

Funded by **the Welsh Assembly Government the Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors Group (WARD)** provides an in house study programme in Cardiff for asylum seeking and refugee doctors. WARD members receive a whole range of support including funding to sit exams. Thirty-one members have revalidated their medical diplomas, and of these 27 are employed. A further 20 are currently re-training.

In Scotland, a race equality statement was published on 8 December 2008 setting out the Scottish Government's priorities for taking forward race equality over 2008- 2011. The statement contains a number of strands of work which will help to tackle discrimination, promote race equality and ensure that people of all ethnicities, including refugees and asylum seekers maximise their potential and can contribute fully to society. The statement fully complements the Scottish Government message that asylum seekers and refugees must be treated fairly and humanely and whilst they are in Scotland must be welcomed and supported.

A total of £5.6m has been made available through the **Race, Religion and Refugee Integration Funding Stream** from 1 July 2008 to March 2011. All projects must demonstrate outcomes linked to the four themes of Improved Communities, More Responsive Communities, Safer Communities and More Active and Vibrant Communities. Of the 33 projects several are in the refugee integration field.

The Move On Group was established in July 2007 in response to the scale of the Case Resolution process in Scotland. Working together, COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) Strategic Migration Partnership, the Scottish Government, UK Border Agency, Glasgow City Council, Jobcentre Plus, Scottish Refugee Council and other agencies ensured that all new refugees and those granted leave to remain were able to quickly and smoothly access integration services. The success of the group demonstrates the benefits of positive partnership working and the lessons learnt will assist the future integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland - for example a dedicated Jobcentre Plus team to deal with people granted through case resolution now deals with all refugees and other people with language support needs. The group continues to meet to provide oversight of the integration needs of all refugees in Scotland.

6. NEXT STEPS

Government and the voluntary sector will continue to work to bring all sectors at all levels together – strengthening engagement at all levels. The direction of the next steps will inevitably change as we respond to emerging issues but what we do will be underpinned by:

- A joint responsibility **of** refugees and **to** refugees
- A commitment to keep *Moving on together* at national, regional and local level

NEXT STEPS FOR RIES

We want refugees using RIES to achieve the best possible integration and employment outcomes. In collaboration with service providers, refugees' progress in the areas of employment, housing and English language will be monitored through performance and best practice boards covering all UK providers. In this way RIES will help to inform the development of local, regional and national policy on refugee integration.

NEXT STEPS FOR RESETTLEMENT

The UK Border Agency will resettle 750 refugees each year by continuing to work closely with other government departments such as Communities and Local Government (CLG), Local Authorities (LAs) and housing associations to identify affordable housing in England.

We will work with new LAs across the UK to increase the number of areas participating in resettlement and will encourage more local authorities to run multi-year programmes.

We will further streamline our business model, including through the increased use of competition in the provision of Gateway services.

In collaboration with UNHCR, we will develop regional media strategies to raise awareness within local communities of the continuing need for refugees to be resettled to the UK.

A key aim is to increase the number of resettled refugees entering employment:

- We will work with local partners to ensure that refugees with overseas qualifications are helped to quickly gain re-accreditation and retrain
- We will ensure that every refugee has access to English language classes.
- We will continue to promote volunteering as a positive avenue to gain skills and references for refugees to enter the UK workforce

UK BORDER AGENCY NEXT STEPS WILL ALSO INCLUDE:

Analysis of the Survey of New Refugees – examining how new refugees, including those helped by the Sunrise pilot, have progressed.

Through the development of Local Immigration Teams, provide a single point of contact for local communities to highlight and discuss the impacts of migration on individuals and organisations.

Continue discussions with Refugee Council and across government concerning Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs): to assess RCOs' support needs, strengthen engagement with RCOs and to optimise their contribution.

Work with other government departments, LAs and organisations providing integration services to refugees, supporting all aspects of community cohesion including the Government's strategy of preventing violent extremism.

In managing those cases granted status, UK Border Agency's Case Resolution Directorate will continue to liaise with receiving authorities and provider organisations.

Explore how from 2011 existing Indicators in the Local Performance Framework might be developed to assist in managing migration impacts.

Work with CLG to identify opportunities to strengthen further relationships between RIES contractors and housing advocates and providers in England.

Utilise the learning and improvements from work with new refugees for the benefit of established refugees.

Engage with organisations working with refugees to ensure that in time Identity Cards for Foreign Nationals provide refugees a robust form of identity which is recognised and accepted by all agencies.

UK Border Agency will continue its programme of continuous improvement to ensure the Sponsorship and Employer Helpline and the Employer Checking Service provide informative services to employers which facilitate refugees' access to employment.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE WORKERS

The **Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)** are committed to the protection of vulnerable workers and ensuring that they know their rights. BERR will work with UK Border Agency to explore how lessons learned from BERR's current campaigns can be used to ensure that refugees are aware of their employment rights and know where to turn to for advice if they suspect that these rights are being abused; and that employers are aware of and fulfil their responsibilities to treat refugees the same as any other worker.

BERR and UK Border Agency will consider BERR's existing arrangements and potential avenues within the refugee sector to determine how best these important awareness-raising tools can be adapted and shared with refugees and those working with and employing refugees.

NEXT STEPS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills will continue its work with CLG and Learning and Skills Council to develop a new local planning approach for

ESOL provision. We expect that the approach will rely on the effectiveness of local intelligence, including the flow of migrants and refugees into an area, to identify and prioritise learners.

We will be keen that local partnerships should work with those people and organisations working with refugees – helping to identify the people who have so far not come forward to access provision. We will need their help in developing an offer that meets the needs of different groups of learners, from those in the labour market to those who are a long way from it.

And as we take the next steps for ESOL we will work with local partners, Further Education providers and a range of voluntary and community organisations to ensure publicly funded provision and engagement activity reaches out to the most vulnerable people and that provision is in place to meet their needs.

NEXT STEPS ON HEALTH

Later in 2009, the Department of Health will issue commissioning guidelines for mental health services for asylum seekers and refugees. This work is linked to “Delivering Race Equality”, a comprehensive action plan for tackling inequalities and discrimination in mental health services in England. The guidelines will highlight the need to integrate the needs of refugees into mainstream planning, the value as partners of refugee organisations and other voluntary groups and the importance of interpretation services.

The Department of Health has also commissioned a Primary Care Service Framework for vulnerable migrant populations, such as refugees. This will be issued during the course of 2009. The framework can be used to assist Primary Care Trusts to design new primary care services where none exist or to adopt or add to existing ones to make them more accessible to refugees by providing background knowledge, and service and implementation information.

INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SERVICE

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have committed to introduce, from 2010/11, a new integrated employment and skills system for all individuals, whether they are in or out of work, which provides people with the help and support they need to acquire new skills and find and progress in sustained employment.

A key feature of this new system, will be engagement with the new universal **adult advancement and careers service (aacs)** in England. Merging and enhancing existing services, **aacs** will have the potential to help every member of society get on in learning and work, providing a personalised service on the basis of need.

Underpinning the new service will be the introduction of **skills accounts** in England from 2010/11 - giving people greater ownership and choice over the learning they undertake, setting out the financial support they are entitled to and providing greater access to a wide range of support and advice services to enable them to take up learning opportunities.

Refugees will be able to use the **aacs** and access **skills accounts** to help plan the best route to improve their skills and get on in work. The **aacs** will make full use of intermediaries in local service providers to reach those that might need more intensive support. A key element of this will be for DIUS, DWP and UK Border Agency to explore together how the new Refugee Integration and Employment Service and aacs can best complement each other.

DIUS are working closely with local partnerships in ten localities to develop advancement networks to join up advice services. This approach will encourage locally driven initiatives, enabling government to tap into their innovative ideas and developments and share what works.

DIUS and DWP are committed to evaluating the effectiveness of the new integrated service to ensure it fully meets the needs of all customer groups, including refugees.

APPENDIX A

REFUGEE INTEGRATION & EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS AND SUB CONTRACTORS

EAST MIDLANDS

Metropolitan Support Trust

EAST OF ENGLAND

British Refugee Council

LONDON

British Refugee Council

Housing Associations' Charitable Trust
TimeBank

NORTH EAST

North of England Refugee Service

A4E

NORTH WEST

Refugee Action

Manchester Refugee Support Network

NORTHERN IRELAND

Multi-cultural Resource Centre

SCOTLAND

Scottish Refugee Council

A4E

TimeBank

Volunteer Centre, Glasgow

SOUTH EAST

Refugee Action

Milton Keynes Citizens Advice

Reading Refugee Support Group

Refugee Resource – Oxford

Slough Refugee Support

SOUTH WEST

Refugee Action

Bristol Citizens Advice

Gloucester Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Harbour in Swindon

Plymouth Citizens Advice

Swindon Citizens Advice

WALES

Welsh Refugee Council

British Red Cross

Displaced People in Action

SOVA

WEST MIDLANDS

British Refugee Council

Centre for Equality and Diversity

Coventry Refugee Centre

Refugee and Migrant Centre

Stoke-on-Trent Citizen Advice Bureau

YORKSHIRE & HUMBER

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Migration Partnership

Hull City Council

Kirklees City Council

Leeds City Council

Northern Refugee Centre

Refugee Council

Refugee Education and Training Advice Service

Refugee New Arrivals Project

Sheffield City Council

