



Centre for Urban and Regional Studies

**WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY
WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
SHARED EVIDENCE BASE**

Asylum seekers and refugees

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Following the establishment of NASS, the past five years have seen significant numbers of asylum seekers arriving in the West Midlands. Over this period, and particularly since the speed up in asylum claim processing in 2003, many of the asylum seekers dispersed to the West Midlands have received leave to remain in the UK and decided to make a place for themselves in the region. Whilst some of these new refugees decide to leave the region there is evidence to suggest that even greater numbers are moving to the West Midlands from other UK dispersal areas (Phillimore 2004). There are no exact figures of the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs) residing in the region. Estimates from key regional bodies suggest that there are around 9000 asylum seekers and between 13,000 and 76530 refugees in the region.

The 2003 Regional Housing Strategy highlighted the need for more robust data on the number of asylum seekers in the region and the demand for “move on” accommodation for refugees. It was felt that the housing demands of asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs) might be sufficiently large as to alter the picture of housing need in particular cluster areas. Three areas were highlighted for further research:

- 1.1 The numbers and impact of the allocation of asylum seekers under the NASS dispersal programme – with emphasis placed upon the characteristics of asylum seekers including ethnicity, family type and age.
- 1.2 The number and impact of those who are granted refugee status in the region and those who chose to move to the West Midlands from other regions.
- 1.3 The impact of ASRs on localities including on local services such as housing, schools, GP surgeries, colleges etc.

The remit of this study is to use existing sources of data and findings from previous research to inform these areas as much as possible. It is recognised that there are major deficiencies in the data available. This study will outline the key gaps in information and make suggestions about the ways in which such gaps might be filled in the future.

The following section considers the methods used to collect data and information for this report. The study then moves on to consider the numbers and locations of asylum seekers living in the region, and possible changes to the dispersal programme and how they might impact on asylum seeker cluster areas. Consideration is then given to the numbers and locations of refugees living in the region. Estimates of the size of the refugee population are made together with a projection of population numbers by 2007. Key policy changes including the Gateway Protection Programme and the introduction of a “local connection” in the Homelessness legislation are outlined. The report then moves on to consider the housing aspirations and needs of refugees and issues around transition and transience. The following section focuses on the impact on localities considering impacts on a range of issues including housing, economic activity, learning, NGOs and social cohesion and regeneration. The report ends through the setting out of conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Researching the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the West Midlands

The deficiencies in UK asylum and refugee data are well recognised (Stewart 2004). Whilst NASS provides each consortium with monthly information on the numbers, locations, ages and ethnicities of supported and subsistence only asylum seekers, information about Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and Interim case asylum seekers is only available from individual authorities. In the West Midlands some seven authorities from Southern England supplied data for this study regarding the number and whereabouts of asylum seekers they were supporting in the region.

The picture is far more complex when trying to seek data about the numbers of refugees living in the region. This is because there are no available central records of the numbers of asylum seekers in the region who have received a decision from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). Failed asylum seekers leave their NASS accommodation and, if not detained or repatriated, tend to live with friends or family. Successful asylum seekers should be given 28 days to leave their NASS accommodation. After this time they are free to live wherever they choose. Some local authorities have recently begun recording, through the use of a refugee marker, the numbers of refugees presenting as homeless. This data is less than complete because not all refugees wish to identify themselves as such and can choose to give different reasons for presenting as homeless.

In order to assess the number of asylum seekers and refugees currently living within the West Midlands the following approaches were taken:

Asylum seekers

- Collate and combine NASS data on subsistence only and supported asylum seekers together with the Refugee Council Emergency Accommodation data set
- Write to all local authorities known to have been supporting Interim¹ cases to assess the current numbers, locations and ethnicities living within the region

Once this data is collated it will provide a fairly complete picture of the locations and numbers of asylum seekers in the region assuming that NASS data is accurate.²

¹ Interim asylum seekers are those dispersed to, or accommodated in, the regions between the December 1999 and the formal introduction of the NASS dispersal programme. They are supported by the local authority that dispersed them to the region.

² Censuses undertaken in NASS properties suggest that data provided is not always accurate. Asylum seekers move from, within and between accommodations without notifying NASS. Some accommodation is illegally occupied by overstayers who may be refugees or failed asylum seekers or legally occupied by failed asylum seeking families who under current arrangements must be housed until removal.

Refugees

- Write to all the authorities covering main dispersal areas and request information on refugees presenting as homeless and those housed. Where possible seek information on ethnicity, location and age.
- Approach RSLs where LSVT has taken place for the same information
- Approach Supporting People departments to explore provision, numbers etc. for refugees in the appropriate local authority area
- Approach DWP for refugee marker data
- Ask the West Midlands Consortium (WMCARS) and Refugee Council (RC) to provide estimates of the numbers of refugees in the region
- Analyse the CORE database to explore the number of refugees housed by RSLs in the West Midlands
- Ask key RCOs in the region to provide data regarding the number of refugees they are serving

Not all local authorities were able to provide the data requested although the majority contributed all the data they were able to access (see Table 2.1). The total number of refugees within this data is far lower than the RC and WMCARS estimates. Thus it should only be used to help gain an indication of the areas that refugees are moving to within the region and not the number of refugees living in the region. It is also important to note that because most of the databases relate to the allocation of social housing, the areas identified in this study as housing refugees may be performing that function because they have available social housing rather than being the main areas that refugees are *selecting* for accommodation. That said research suggests that refugees will only accept offers of social housing in areas they consider safe (see below and Phillimore 2004).

Type of data	Supporting People	Housing Allocations	Homelessness	RCO
Birmingham	Yes	Yes	No	No
Coventry	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dudley	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sandwell	No	No	No	No
Staffordshire	No	Yes	Yes	No
Stoke	Yes	No	Yes	No
Telford and Wrekin	No	No	Yes	No
Walsall	No	Yes	Yes	No
Warwickshire	No	Yes	Yes	No
Wolverhampton	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Table 2.1: Refugee data collected for the West Midlands Regional Housing Study

Once all the above data had been collected it was mapped using GIS. This enabled the locations of asylum seekers and refugees in the region to be identified. In addition to analysing the above data CURS has also sought to consider the likely impacts of proposed new developments emerging from the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004 on provision of housing for asylum seekers and refugees.

Impact of asylum seekers and refugees on localities

The scope of this study did not permit the commissioning of any new primary research. Therefore CURS sought to collate key findings from previous studies undertaken in the

region for the Learning and Skills Councils (Phillimore and Goodson et al. 2003; 2004; Goodson & Phillimore 2005), Wolverhampton Connects and Employment Action Team (Phillimore & Goodson 2001a&b; Goodson & Phillimore 2004) and for the Birmingham Sandwell HMRA (Phillimore 2004). Specifically these reports sought to outline the main impacts of the asylum seeker and refugee populations on housing waiting lists and services generally.

Chapter 3: Numbers and locations of asylum seekers and refugees.

Asylum seekers

A total of 9604 asylum seekers were identified as currently living in the West Midlands with the vast majority of these individuals being placed in the central sub-region. Analysis of NASS data indicates that the majority of asylum seekers placed in the region are aged under 35 (76.6%) with the largest proportion being aged between 25 and 34 (see Figure 3.1). Some 72% of asylum seekers are male and 28% female. The largest ethnic group are Iraqis (19.9%) followed by Africans (19.4%), Iranians (12.7%) and Afghanis (10.9%) (see Figure 3.2). The majority of NASS applicants were singles (74.34%), 8.43% were couples and 17.16% were families.

Figure 3.1: Age of asylum seekers in the West Midlands

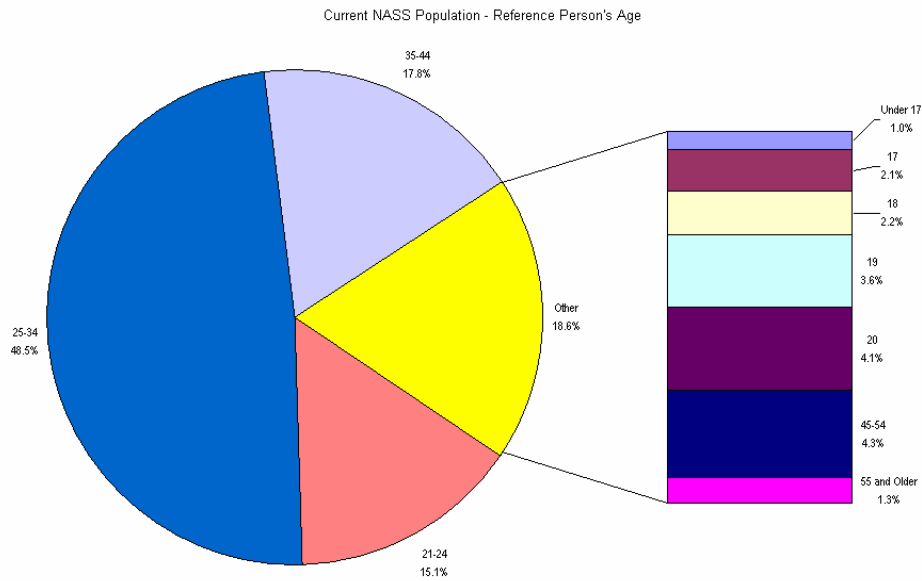
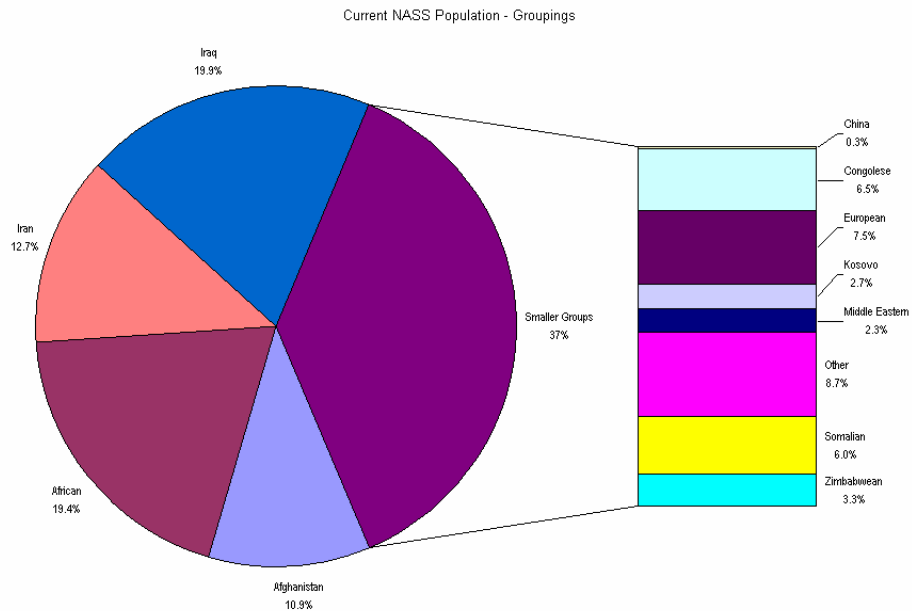
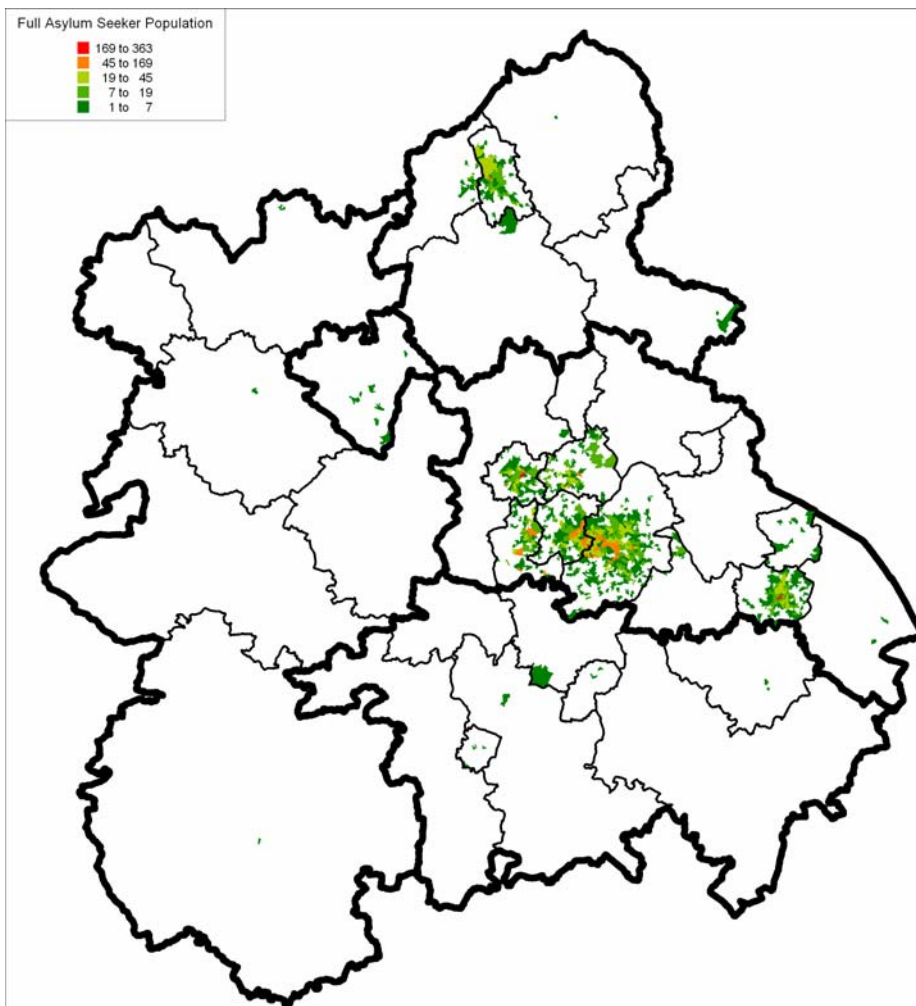


Figure 3.2: Ethnicity of asylum seekers in the West Midlands.



The largest asylum seeker populations are located in Birmingham (3792), Sandwell (1354), Coventry (1225), Wolverhampton (936), Stoke (731), Dudley (711) and Walsall (552). Figure 3.3 indicates the spread of asylum seekers across the region. Even within the main dispersal towns or cities the greatest proportions of asylum seekers are clustered into relatively small geographical areas, although many wards have a small asylum seeker population.

Figure 3.3: Locations of asylum seekers across the West Midlands



Birmingham's asylum seeker population covers 36 wards with the main populations located in

- Soho (621)
- Aston (419)
- Ladywood (405)
- Edgbaston (320)
- Nechells (282).

Sandwell's asylum seeking population covers 23 wards with key concentrations in

- Soho and Victoria (347)
- St Pauls (196)
- Smethwick (165).

Looking at Birmingham and Sandwell's data combined demonstrates that the area covered by the Urban Living HMRA contains the greatest concentration of asylum seekers in the region.

Coventry's asylum seeking population spreads across 18 wards with the largest populations living in

- St Michael's (525)
- Foleshill (253).

Wolverhampton's population covers 15 wards with the main populations living in

- Heath Town (407)
- St Peter's (155).

Stoke's population is spread over 19 wards but concentrated in

- Burslem South (191)
- Hanley West and Shelton (146).

Dudley's population covers 18 wards but is located mainly in

- St James's (109)
- Brierley Hill (101)
- Netherton and Woodside (92).

Finally Walsall's population covers 19 wards with concentrations in

- Pleck (139)
- St Matthew's (68)
- Hatherton Rushall (66).

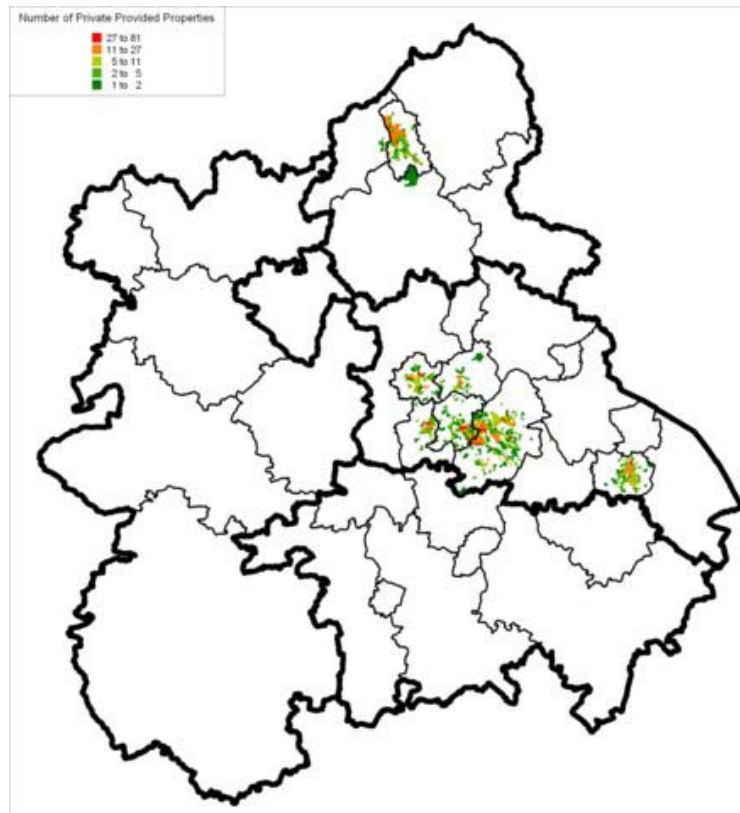
Given the large concentrations of asylum seekers in a small number of wards the future of these areas may be affected by any changes to dispersal policy. In addition policy decisions taken by the HMRA regarding the future of key asylum seeker wards are likely to have a major impact on surrounding areas.

The Dispersal Programme

The 1999 Act established the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). This organisation took responsibility for accommodation and support for all new asylum seekers. NASS fulfils its responsibilities by procuring accommodation from local authorities and private providers. Asylum seekers needing accommodation are dispersed to the regions on a “no choice” basis. Private landlords signed contracts with NASS early in 2000. Most local authorities signed contracts, negotiated by their Regional Consortia, later in 2000. In 2005 these contracts are up for renewal. There is currently a great deal of debate about the form and size of the new contracts. There are several possible scenarios:

- 1.4 Some private contracts will not be renewed or will be renewed at massively reduced levels – indeed contracts with Accommodata and Rose Lodge who between them provided 547 units (excluding hostels) in the West Midlands have already been cancelled. It is thought that private accommodation providers’ stock is split fairly equally between owned and leased. Further information is needed about the actions providers are likely to take in the event of contracts being changed. Given that there are a further 1570 properties under the control of private providers, most of these concentrated into a relatively small number of areas (see Figure 3.4) the implications for the housing market could be enormous.

Figure 3.4: The locations of private properties contracted to NASS



- 1.5 All contracts will be renewed but at lower levels reflecting the decrease in the number of asylum seekers entering the UK. The implications for the housing market outlined above will be spread across the public and private sectors and will be smaller scale.
- 1.6 NASS will decide to focus upon four or five dispersal regions with emphasis on multi-cultural areas. Those not selected will not have their contracts renewed. It is thought that the West Midlands, as the largest dispersal area outside of London, would maintain its contracts. It is possible the numbers being dispersed to the region would remain at existing levels.
- 1.7 Contracts will be renewed but some local authorities will not wish to renew their contracts or will be unable to do so because of LSVT. In some dispersal areas there has been a degree of clearance and a reduction in the number of units available for contract. With reduced capacity within the council sector NASS may need to increase the levels of contract with private providers or consider contracting with RSLs.
- 1.8 The existing contracts will be extended for 18 months

Furthermore the way in which dispersal is managed within the regions is set to change. There are now two main possibilities:

Fully Delegated Model

- Function is devolved to the Regional Consortia (WMCARS) which then arranges accommodation procurement and allocations and all wrap around services.
- WMCARS responsible for delivering a contract specified in high level outcome terms (e.g. to care for X,000 Asylum Seekers) with minimal NASS specification of inputs.
- Involves extensive devolution of authority with associated political and financial risk transfer.
- WMCARS will have to create a robust legal entity with which NASS can contract.
- Contractual payments made by reference to people cared for and not bed-spaces which are the WMCARS's responsibility to organise.
- Responds to WMCARS/ Local Authority desire for much more local input into dispersal policy and its day to day operation.

Partially Delegated

- Similar to the single strand model; in-region cluster policy primarily responsibility of WMCARS; accommodation procurement organised by NASS and managed strategically and operationally by WMCARS.
- WMCARS will manage housing contracts with LAs, RSLs and private providers and will be responsible for accommodation allocations, wrap around services and inspection.
- Financial risk mainly with NASS but WMCARS has to demonstrate it is achieving Best Value for NASS.

Regardless of the model adopted WMCARS will have much more control over the procurement of properties. This means that local authorities will be able to liaise with them to reach agreement about the most appropriate areas to house asylum seekers in the region and there should be considerably more control over the location of the asylum seeker population

than there has been over the past five years. The issue of key importance for the region is the renewal of NASS contracts. The concentration of asylum seeker housing is such that failure to renew private contracts will have considerable impacts on housing markets in key ASR areas unless action is taken to work with landlords to explore how excess properties might be used. For example AS housing could be converted to much needed move on accommodation for refugees if landlords could be convinced to overcome their reluctance to deal with the Housing Benefits system.

Continuation of contracts at existing levels can only increase the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the main dispersal areas. There are two strands of thought about the impact of this approach. Some suggest that clustering is the most effective way of dealing with dispersal because it enables a critical mass of ASRs to gather in the same area and work together to develop community groups thereby building some social capital. Others have argued that introducing newcomers at levels of more than 1% of the existing population can contribute to deterioration in social cohesion as local people begin to feel they are being overwhelmed by ASRs and possibly react to their presence in negative ways. It might be useful to explore levels of racist harassment against ASRs in the region and how numbers of incidents relate to the proportions of ASRs in each area. In order to do this some degree of primary research would be necessary; anecdotal evidence suggests few ASRs report racist harassment to the police.

An issue that is extremely hard to quantify is the number of failed asylum seekers living within the region. Whilst efforts to support the voluntary removal and deportation of failed asylum seekers have been increased there remain large numbers who go underground upon receipt of a negative decision, are unable to return to their country of origin because the country will not accept them or whose journey is considered too dangerous at the present time. Failed asylum seekers who are prepared to sign a declaration stating that they will return as soon as practicable are permitted Section 4 Hardship support. Under these arrangements they are usually allocated a place in a hostel with full board. Until recently few failed asylum seekers have been supported under these arrangements but NASS has recently announced a willingness to support many more Iraqis and attendees at the consultation event thought that some 1500 had been housed since December 2004. The majority of failed asylum seekers are supported by friends or family or support themselves through illegal working sometimes linked to poor quality accommodation. Many destitute refugees and asylum-seekers are homeless although few are sleeping rough on the streets. A consultant employed by the Church Urban Fund has recently tried to ascertain numbers and suggest there are between 500-2,000 homeless failed asylum seekers in Birmingham (Scott-Flynn forthcoming).

Chapter 4: The numbers and impact of those granted refugee status.

It is recognised that there are huge gaps in the data regarding number of refugees in the UK. We have contacted all of the main asylum seeker receiving authorities in the West Midlands and key RSLs where LSVT has occurred and requested data on the number of refugees presenting as homeless and the numbers housed in their properties and via Supporting People. Where the data was available it has been analysed by ethnicity and age. The data collected tells us the whereabouts of refugees located largely in RSL and Local Authority Housing and may be skewed towards those refugees judged priority homeless³. There is much less information about refugees living with friends or family or in private rented accommodation because there is no database containing this information. In the case of Dudley and Wolverhampton we were given access to the databases of key Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) in the areas. These gave us postcodes for refugees living in a wide range of different accommodation types. These databases were cleaned to ensure that there was no duplication with the Housing Allocations data. There is a need for a larger number of RCOs to collect information about the numbers of refugees using their services and to be prepared to share the information to help build a regional picture of the number and whereabouts of refugees.

DWP data detailing the numbers of refugees currently seeking employment may shed some light on the numbers in the region and, if they can be persuaded to release postcodes, their whereabouts. This data will not be available until later in 2005 at the earliest and then will be subject to negotiations regarding the Data Protection Act. A further possible source of data regarding refugees outside of social housing would be Housing Benefit information. However it is understood that in most authorities refugees are not being marked at present.

In addition to seeking data from the various local authorities acting as dispersal areas we asked the two organisations working with refugees on a strategic basis to estimate the numbers of refugees in the region.

Estimating the size of the refugee population

The Refugee Council (Midlands) estimated that there are currently 13,000 refugees in the region calculated in the following fashion:

- 4,000 plus refugees from Vietnam,
- 2,000 plus programme Bosnians
- 300 plus ethnic Albanians/Kosovans.
- 1,000 plus Somalian refugees,
- 1,000 plus Iranians,
- 1,700 Afghans

³ Priority homeless refugees have dependent children or are vulnerable adults.

- 1,000 plus Iraqis,
- 2,000 refugees from West Africa, including, Burundi, Angola, Sudan and Cameroon as well as a small number from Zimbabwe.

They expect a further 2,300 each year to become refugees or clients with status.

The West Midlands Consortia for Asylum and Refugee Support (WMCARS) estimate there are 76530 refugees in the region on the following basis:

- Total NASS clients dispersed to region and granted leave to remain to date 18780
- Home Office estimates that 25% of all refugees from other regions enter the West Midlands and a tiny percentage leave. This figure equates to 39073 and is the proportion of all positive decisions granted since dispersal began
- The above figures exclude dependents at 15% adding 8678
- Between 1990 and 2000 between 10-15,000 refugees have entered the region out of 177070 created during that time.

The figures in the WMCARS model are based on Home Office data.

CURS sought to estimate the number of refugees in the region and to provide projections from 1990 to 2007 using existing figures for asylum seekers and IND determination rates (see Table 4.1). If we assume that after appeals 34% of applicants are given the right to remain (based on mean determination rates 2003/4) and that once asylum seekers are given a decision on their case they leave their accommodation and are replaced by asylum seekers newly dispersed to the region then 6439 bed spaces would yield 6030 refugees in 2004 (see Table 4.2). Added to this decisions are included from:

- Interim cases (a one off figure as accommodation is not re-used) at 550 (b)
- The influx of refugees from outside the region (estimated at 15% of total asylum seeker population based on HMRA research⁴) (g)
- The number of Somalis arriving from elsewhere in the UK (e)
- Those who are supported on a voucher only basis (34% of 1232) (d)
- The estimated 6% who leave the region (h)
- Emergency accommodation and UASC have been excluded
- All calculations pre-2004 are estimates based on higher asylum numbers than 2004 but lower determination speeds (see Table 4.1)

Table 4.1: Number of applications and nature of decision making for the whole of the UK (IND 2005)

Date	Applications	% change from previous quarter	Top 5 applicant nationalities	Timeliness of decision making ⁵	Decisions
July to September 2004	8605	+9%	Iran China Somalia Zimbabwe Iraq	84% 64%	3% ILR 8% HP/DL 18% on appeal
April to June	7920	-11%	Iran	83%	3% ILR

⁴ This proportion was slightly higher than the HMRA figure because the HMRA percentage only counted those living in social housing. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the West Midlands asylum seeker population

⁵ a) % initial decisions within 2 months b) % of whole cases incl appeals within 6 months

2004			China Somalia Zimbabwe Pakistan	63%	8% HP/DL 20% on appeal
January to March 2004	8940	-17%	Somalia Iran China Zimbabwe Turkey	a) 82%	4% ILR 9% HP/DL 22% on appeal
October to December 2003	10825	-9%	Somalia China Iran Zimbabwe Turkey	a) 80%	4% ILR 8% HP/DL 21% on appeal
July to September 2003	12055	+13%	Somalia China Iran Zimbabwe Iraq	a) 82%	5% ILR 7% HP/DL 20% on appeal
April to June 2003	10585	-34%	Somalia Zimbabwe China India Iraq	a) 81%	7% ILR 7% HP/DL 21% on appeal
January to March 2003	16000	-32%	Iraq Somalia Zimbabwe Afghanistan China	a) 75%	7% ILR 19% ELR 17% on appeal
October to December 2002	22760	+2%	Iraq Zimbabwe Somalia Afghanistan China	a) 66%	10% ILR 24% ELR 20% on appeal
July to September 2002	22569	+11%	Iraq Somalia Zimbabwe Afghanistan China	a) 77%	10% ILR 22% ELR 24% on appeal
April to June 2002	20400	+8%	Iraq Somalia Zimbabwe Afghanistan China	a) 60%	9% ILR 27% ELR 25% on appeal
January to March 2002	19520	+8%	Iraq Afghanistan Zimbabwe Somalia Sri Lanka	a) 53%	9% ILR 26% ELR 25% on appeal
October to December 2001	18005	-5%	Afghanistan Iraq Sri Lanka Somalia Turkey	a) 48%	9% ILR 17% ELR 19% on appeal
July to August 2001	18855	+21%	Afghanistan Somalia Iraq Sri Lanka Turkey	Data not available	9% ILR 18% ELR 20% on appeal

The CURS exercise suggests that there are currently (end 2004) 44260 refugees in the West Midlands and that this figure will increase to 69865 by the end of 2007 (see Table 4.2). CURS' estimate suggests that the Refugee Council estimate, which covers the period from the Vietnamese Resettlement Quota Programme in 1979, is likely to be underestimating the number of refugees in the region whilst WMCARS' estimate, which like CURS' only covers the period from 1990, may be on the high side. This view was generally held by attendees at the consultation event.

Table 4.2: CURS estimate of the number of refugees in the West Midlands 2000-2007

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
a) NASS positive decisions to date ⁶	3000	5000	7100	-	-	-	-	-
b) Interim cases (one off)	200	300	400	500	500	550 (amnesty)	-	-
c) Determinations since speed up	-	-	-	6000	6030	6030	6030	6030
d) Subsistence only ⁷	300	500	700	1200	1117	1117	1117	1117
e) Somali (from Europe)	100	200	300	500	500	500	500	500
f) Sangatte (one off)				104				
g) Incomers	540	900	1275	1246	1222	1230	1147	1147
h) Out goers	-216	-360	-510	-499	-489	-492	-459	-459
i) Notional figure for pre-interim cases ⁸	7000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	10524	6540	9265	9051	8880	8935	8335	8335
Cumulative total		17064	26329	35380	44260	53195	61530	69865
Total								69865

The amount of data we have been able to collect regarding refugee numbers and locations is much lower than the above estimates and should be treated with caution. Outside of Dudley and Wolverhampton the maps indicate the areas within which refugees have been able to locate social housing rather than the main refugee communities. We were able to locate data on 3110 refugees living in the West Midlands of these 1639 were being housed under a Supporting People programme. The majority of refugees were living in Birmingham (1486), spread across 34 wards with concentrations of population in

- Soho (188)
- Nechells (165)
- Sparkbrook (137)
- Handsworth (132)
- Small Heath (103).

There were also significant refugee populations living in Coventry (705) across 16 wards with concentrations in

- Henley (224)
- Binley and Willenhall (104).

Wolverhampton had a refugee population of 521 spread across 12 wards and living in

- St Peter's (210)

⁶ Based on estimates on the size of the asylum seeking population, the speed of decision making at that time and the percentage of positive decisions.

⁷ Based upon estimated numbers of subsistence only until 2004 when actual numbers and 34% percent determination figure is used.

⁸ Based on Refugee Council and WMCARS estimates from 1990 (see above)

- Graisbury (81)
- Heath Town (62).

Of the remaining authorities only Dudley had a sizeable refugee population (216) living predominantly in Netherton and Woodside (53) and Castle and Priory (37) and across 15 wards. The locations of refugees living in the West Midlands is illustrated in Figure 4.1. Two of the four authorities that were able to provide data on homeless presentation had been approached by refugees. These were Stoke which had received 271 applications over a 12 month period and Walsall which had received 24. None of the other dispersal areas were able to provide data.

The age profile of refugees tended to be slightly older than asylum seekers although the majority were still aged below 34 (62.7%) (see Figure 4.2). It may be the case that older people are more likely to have dependents with them in the UK and therefore be considered priority homeless. There was insufficient data regarding gender to calculate the split between male and female. Information was available on ethnicity. This suggested that Africans (excluding Somalis) were the largest ethnic group in our database (30.2%) followed by Iraqis (23.3%), others (13.7%) and Somalis (13.5%) (see Figure 4.3). Anecdotal evidence from discussions with housing providers suggests that Africans are more likely to have dependents and therefore be eligible for social housing than Iraqis because of their priority housing need. In addition it is possible that with the change in political climate in Iraq, IND are granting fewer positive decision to Iraqis. In terms of family living arrangements more refugees are living in family accommodation than asylum seekers. Some 57% of refugees were living as families, 7.9% as couples and 35% as singles. This could again reflect the reliance on social housing databases wherein families would be deemed housing priority. It is important to note that whilst the majority of asylum seekers are single males these individuals are entitled to reunite with their families once they have received Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). The impact of family re-unions is likely to be significant in the next two or three years for example in Wolverhampton 500 asylum seekers were granted Exceptional Leave to Remain four years ago. Very shortly their status will be changed to ILR and reunions can begin.

Figure 4.1: Refugees living in the West Midlands

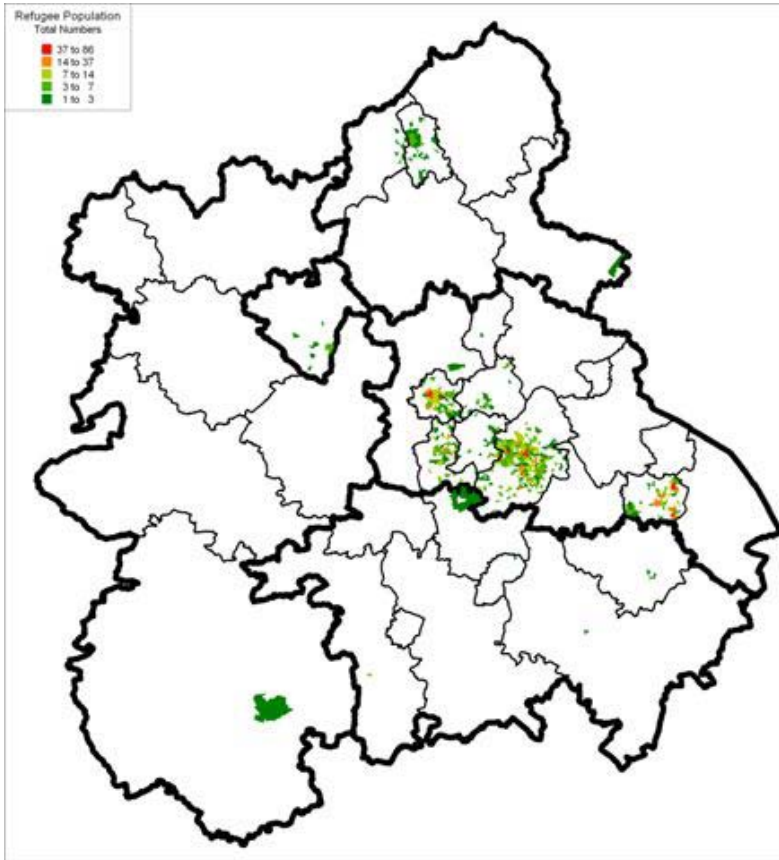
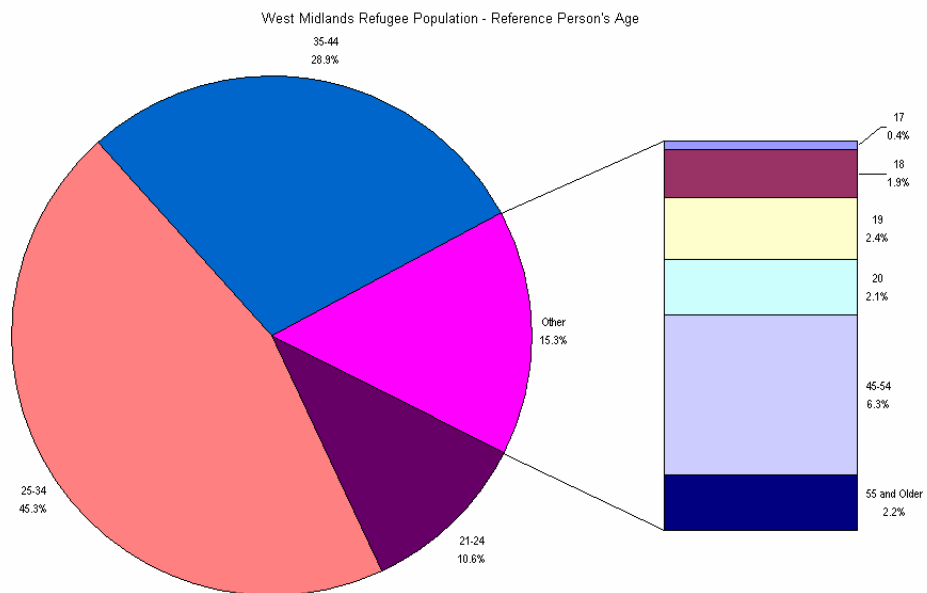


Figure 4.2: Ages of refugees living in the West Midlands



Gateway Protection Programme

In the future it is possible that the region will see more arrivals under the Gateway Protection Programme. This initiative is run as a partnership between the Home Office, host local authorities, voluntary sector agencies who co-ordinate the programme and Jobcentre Plus. It will bring modest numbers of refugees, who may have been living in UNHCR refugee camps for years, to the UK and settle them in the regions. Some 69 West African refugees were settled in Sheffield earlier in 2004. If this programme grows it may signal a move away from asylum seekers being dispersed to temporary accommodation in the region to refugees being placed in permanent housing. The intimation is that this will not occur on an ad hoc basis as was the case with Sangatte but will be agreed with individual authorities. Individuals arriving directly from camps in Africa will need some time and a great deal of support to adjust to life in the UK. They will not have had the opportunities for adjustment that asylum seekers have whilst they are waiting for their case to be decided. The implications for issues around language, education and employments are extensive. It is understood that extra funds will be available to help provide increased levels of support.

Housing aspirations and needs of refugees

Research undertaken for the Learning and Skills Councils in Birmingham and Solihull, and Coventry and Warwickshire and the Birmingham and Sandwell Pathfinder have given some insight into the areas in these sub-regions that asylum seekers and refugees aspire to live in once they are able to move. The most popular areas were those that are close to the city centre and multi-cultural in nature. Much of the accommodation in these areas consists of Victorian terraced housing or local authority high-rise. There is a tendency for asylum seekers to want to remain in the area they were dispersed to once they have received leave to remain. This is particularly the case if a large proportion of asylum seekers from the same country of origin in that area. There is some evidence to suggest that refugees remain in the same area because they have little knowledge about what other parts of the region can offer them. These findings have been supported in areas outside of the West Midlands (see Coward et al. 2003). Aspirations may change over time as refugees become more familiar with the region and what it has to offer.

In Birmingham Handsworth, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill, had the greatest concentrations of refugees. Other multi-cultural areas close to the city centre such as Aston and Newtown also appeared to be favoured. In Sandwell the parts of Smethwick that adjoined Handsworth had the greatest concentrations of refugees whilst in Wolverhampton Heathtown and Whitmore Reans housed the most refugees. A small number of areas in Coventry (St Michaels, Binley, Willenhall, Henley, Foleshill and Lower Stoke) had the largest concentrations of refugees. Anecdotal information from refugees interviewed in the above areas has suggested that Stoke and the remainder of the Black Country are not as popular. These suggestions have been reinforced by discussions with WMCARS who believe Stoke, Dudley and Walsall to be less popular with refugees because these dispersal areas were not as multi-cultural as those in Birmingham and they lacked the support services available in the larger cities.

A recent household survey in the Black Country (Goodson and Phillimore 2005) revealed that 79% of refugee respondents (n613) planned to remain within the Black Country with the largest numbers of refugees planning to remain in Wolverhampton (27%), and Smethwick (16%). Some 12% said they would remain in Dudley but only 2% in Walsall. Of those seeking to leave the Black Country only 4% were planning to leave the region altogether. Outside of the areas previously researched large-scale survey work is needed to identify the proportion of asylum seekers who intend to leave the region once they receive status. The Black Country survey also revealed that 49% of respondents expected to be housed in council or RSL

accommodation when they left NASS housing, a figure that might prove unrealistic given the supply issues around social housing in key cluster areas. A further 9% expected to live with friends or family and 8% in private rented accommodation. Only 5% expected to own a property at any point in the future. Elsewhere we are unable to explore the aspirations of ASRs in terms of areas sought and tenures and types of property required. Area could only be explored through large-scale survey although soundings might be possible through telephone interviews with local authorities and RCOs in the areas.

Whilst at present refugees can seek to be accommodated in any area once they have been evicted from their NASS accommodation, the Government is seeking to legislate to create a "local connection" for the purpose of the homelessness legislation. In future refugees will not be able to apply for social housing in an area unless they were dispersed there by NASS. The objective of this approach is to reduce pressure on London and the South East. In the West Midlands it may mean that there will be less pressure on the more popular dispersal areas: Sparkbrook, Sandwell, Handsworth, Wolverhampton and Coventry and a greater expectation that asylum seekers dispersed to other parts of the Black Country and Stoke will be housed locally, at least where they have been assessed as priority homeless. As decisions are made under the Family Amnesty families will only be entitled to social housing in their local area under the "local connection" this may apply extra pressure on social housing and temporary accommodation.

The transition period and transience

The HMRA study (Phillimore 2004) and studies undertaken for the Learning and Skills Councils across the region have highlighted the destabilising impact of the 28 day transition period on the refugee population. It is likely that the experience of refugees across the West Midlands is similar except in areas, such as Wolverhampton, where some move-on accommodation has been provided. In depth interviews in the HMRA revealed that upon notification of eviction from their NASS housing the majority of refugees sought advice from their friends or relatives. Not all of the advice they received was accurate. The largest proportion of refugees went to their local Neighbourhood Office to seek accommodation. Others went to the Midland Refugee Council (MRC) or a hostel. Most were not assessed as being in priority need so moved into shared accommodation with friends or into shared MRC accommodation.

All of the accommodation located in the HMRA was temporary. Refugees moved frequently, sometimes up to five times in less than a year. Reasons for movement include eviction of their host from NASS accommodation, breakdown of relationship with friends or family, racial harassment and poor quality of emergency accommodation. Even after several years only one out of 21 respondents had secured a permanent home. A household survey undertaken as part of the same study found that even when refugees located permanent housing the majority of them (54.6%) believed they would remain in that housing for less than a year. The Black Country survey revealed that 70% of respondents would stay less than a year. It is possible that the turbulent experience of being an asylum seeker, followed by the disruption of the transition period, might shape the housing aspirations of refugees so that they view transience as the norm and continue to move around the main refugee communities in the region and possibly across the UK. Certainly the evidence suggested that refugees were being forced into homelessness because of a lack of move on accommodation, the need for knowledge about locating housing, the absence of specialist advice and guidance and the tendency to respond to housing crises rather than taking a planned approach to locating housing.

Housing aspirations

The HMRA and Black Country studies also explored the kinds of tenure, facilities and property that refugees were seeking. Views on tenure re-enforced the issue of lack of knowledge:

- Council housing was the most popular: seen as being cheap with repairs taken care of and offering permanence. However single refugees found council housing hard to access. They had little understanding of the allocations process often feeling that luck rather than any particular process determined whether or not they were housed. There was no knowledge of supply and demand issues or the ways in which they might increase the likelihood of being housed through expanding the number of areas they were prepared to live in
- Low levels of knowledge about RSL housing – most were simply unaware that the sector existed
- Private rented accommodation was thought to be unavailable to individuals receiving Housing Benefit
- Owner Occupation was disregarded by most as unaffordable but seen as the ultimate goal by a small proportion
- Sharing with friends viewed as unattractive because refugees were tired of having no privacy.

In addition refugees were asked what facilities made an area attractive to them. The main responses were

- Transport – good quality, wide ranging provision would enable them to gain access to most other facilities
- Access to a GP – many have long term health issues and there is a history of struggling to locate healthcare amongst refugees
- Shops – but not necessarily specialist shops
- Jobs or training that could lead to employment – self sufficiency is seen as critical
- Schools
- Community – most seek a multi-cultural community rather than to live amongst only their ethnic group. A very small proportion preferred to live in less multi-cultural areas so they could improve their language skills more quickly.

Finally refugees were asked what types of property they sought. Their main priorities were

- Safe – both in terms of area and the building
- Self-contained
- One bedroom or bed sit for singles
- Three bedroom for families – in the next five years the number of refugee families will increase due to reunion or marriage
- Furniture was not considered by refugees as most are unaware that social housing is unfurnished.

The main problem in terms of refugees' aspirations is that they are seeking council housing in areas that do not have a surplus of social housing and they do not have a fall back plan to rely on when they are not offered the social housing they want. They do not have knowledge about areas with high numbers of voids where they may be able to locate housing more quickly and are worried about moving outside known areas because of the fear of racial

harassment. Serious attention has to be given to working with private landlords in the most popular ASR areas to develop move on accommodation perhaps involving a Bond scheme to cover deposits. Alternatively local authorities could explore the possibility of moving groups of refugees into social housing outside of the main dispersal areas. This approach offers considerable challenges in terms of maintaining social cohesion but has been attempted in Coventry and Heath Town and is soon to be piloted in Smethwick. Research is needed to examine the success of initiatives in these areas and the ways in which they might be applied elsewhere across the region.

Chapter 5: Impact on localities

The research undertaken for the Learning and Skills Councils indicated that in the main dispersal areas the arrival of asylum seekers had a major impact on localities. A report by Sheffield Hallam University (2003) on asylum seeking in NDC areas also outlines the extent of the impact on dispersal areas. Some of these findings are included below. The lack of data collected by service providers means it is difficult to assess the exact extent of the pressures on services although qualitative interviewing with providers and ASRs has identified a number of implications in terms of housing, economic activity, learning, health, NGOs, social cohesion and regeneration.

Housing

- Reduction in the availability of emergency accommodation because of the number of families assessed as priority homeless. One authority has seen their excess of emergency accommodation replaced with a need to contract Bed and Breakfast bed spaces. The impact on the budget has been dramatic but ODPM refuse further funds without data detailing the number of refugees involved
- Pressure on neighbourhood offices in key dispersal areas – many applicants do not understand the housing system and, because of language issues, need a great deal of support with even the most basic query
- Lack of training for Housing Officers about the needs of refugees
- In some areas Supporting People has been very useful to refugees and RCOs but all funds have been used despite need for much more supported housing. In other areas there have been suggestions that SP are not meeting their objectives. A review of performance would help assess where the initiative is working and what approaches are most effective
- Shortage of social housing, particularly in large family accommodation, in dispersal areas
- An improvement in social cohesion and environment in areas that were previously low demand (for example Whitmore Reans, Handsworth) this may be threatened if contracts are not renewed
- Concern that local people might be priced out of previously affordable areas (see also Cower et al. 2003)
- Fewer void properties in low demand dispersal areas
- In some cases asylum seekers have been spending extended periods of time in NASS contracted emergency accommodation – in key dispersal areas young male asylum seekers were observed spending large amounts of time “on the streets” an issue that apparently caused concern to local residents
- Lack of move on accommodation for new refugees
- Racial harassment against refugee families housed in predominantly white areas
- Lack of holistic advice about locating housing or the nature of housing markets in the region
- Extreme pressure on specialist housing advice organisations – refugees housing problems are so complicated they can take weeks to resolve
- Overcrowding in ASR accommodation as asylum seekers and refugees offer shelter to homeless friends. This may, over time, impact on health.
- There is the possibility that a proportion of private landlords are not maintaining their NASS properties in adequate condition (Cower et al. 2003). In the long term this may have an impact on the environment in dispersal areas.
- There are also concerns that RCOs are increasingly turning to accommodation provision as a way of dealing with refugee housing crises. However some of the organisations involved have insufficient knowledge of the regulatory framework and may be offering accommodation that is unsafe or unfit.

- There have also been reports of some private landlords failing to signpost asylum seekers to appropriate services in contravention of their contractual agreements
- The potentially negative impact of the presence of AS on community cohesion could increase the unpopularity of some areas (Cower et al. 2003)
- AS are an extremely transient group and may not be willing to make a long term commitment to deprived areas. Any rises in housing demand may be short lived (Cower et al. 2003) unless initiatives such as self-build are introduced to promote ownership.

Economic activity

- Extremely high levels of unemployment and under-employment of refugees (for example 63% unemployed in Birmingham and Solihull)
- Rates of remuneration for employed refugees are less than half of the sub-region average (Phillimore and Goodson et al. 2003; 2004)
- Extreme pressure on Jobcentre Plus officers in key dispersal areas – many refugees do not understand the Benefits system and struggle to communicate their needs
- Tendency for officers to refer refugees to low skilled work regardless of their skills because of the time pressures
- Some JCP officers have had difficult experiences with frustrated refugees – there is a tendency to view particular groups as being difficult rather than treating each individual on their merits
- There has been some discussion about JCP moving from a drop in service to a telephone advice line. The implications for refugees are enormous unless provision is guaranteed in all languages.
- JCP struggle to encourage employers to recruit refugees – stereotypical views are common and JCP do not have the resources to overcome these views
- Reluctance of employers to take on refugees for fear of tensions with existing employees
- Many refugees have high levels of skills or qualifications and offer an opportunity for the region which is currently being overlooked
- Lack of specialist programmes to help refugees use existing skills and qualifications
- Lack of an established work experience programme linking refugees from across the region with employers who could use their skills
- Refugees are beginning to make contributions to their local economies by setting up in business, particularly in catering and translation (see also Cower et al. 2003). Refugees need greater level of support to help them become self-employed.
- There is evidence that many AS are working in the informal economy. Pay and conditions are said to be poor. The relaxing of work restrictions would enable AS to gain legitimate UK work experience and to contribute to the local economy.

Learning

- Extreme pressure on ESOL teaching – shortage of qualified ESOL teachers
- Lack of knowledge about UK qualifications to enable refugees to make the right choices
- High drop out rates due to transience, lack of motivation and unsuitable nature of courses
- Lack of resources to enable provision of holistic support – often tutors are asked to help with personal crises such as homelessness but do not have the time or expertise. Unsupported students are the most likely to drop out
- Lack of affordable and available child care means it is difficult for refugee women to attend ESOL classes – refugee women are experiencing higher levels of disadvantage than men
- Lack of specialist ESOL courses to help ASRs gain the language they need to work in their areas of expertise

- Lack of an Accreditation of Prior Learning programme in the region to enable skilled refugees to gain some proof of their abilities
- Lack of resources to support ASR children unable to speak English
- Some ASR children struggle to gain places in local schools, particularly if the school is popular
- Reluctance of some schools to admit ASR children over 15 years of age because of concerns about the impact they might have on the school's GCSE results
- Refugee children have their education interrupted when they are forced to move area once evicted from NASS accommodation
- Some schools reported that the arrival of ASR children had a positive impact on the learning environment and on social cohesion – local children learned about other countries and were impressed by the newcomers' desire to apply themselves to learning
- Schools are sometimes left to deal with a wide range of their pupils needs and lack resources (Cower et al. 2003)
- Schools lack resources for dealing with large numbers of ASR children particularly around issues of translation (Cower et al. 2003)

Health

- Lack of understanding of the health system – can lead to inappropriate use of resources for example using A&E as a drop-in service or neglecting a medical problem until it becomes an emergency
- Extreme pressure on GPs lists in dispersal areas to the extent that some lists have closed and ASRs struggle to locate a GP
- Lack of funding to deal with the additional support needs of ASRs – in particular language, and mental health needs
- Difficulties surrounding lack of mutual cultural understandings when delivering health care
- Problems delivering continuing and holistic treatment to a transient population
- Lack of health awareness and screening programmes especially tackling HIV and sexual health
- Lack of specialist counselling to deal with trauma and post traumatic stress disorder

NGOs

- Extreme pressure on existing staff and lack of resources to recruit further
- Reliance on voluntary labour
- Lack of knowledge about asylum issues and the different cultures of asylum seekers in generalist organisations
- Lack of a central source of information so an over-reliance on word of mouth on rights and entitlements
- Lack of capacity to deal with the wide range of ASR languages
- Lack of adequate premises to deal with the increased number of ASR clients
- Need for capacity building within specialist refugee organisations to help managers to grow their organisations successfully
- Concern amongst some well established BME organisations that the sheer level of need from refugees will lead to a re-direction of resources from their traditional client base
- Reliance on short-term funding makes it difficult for RCOs to work in a strategic fashion
- RCOs lack the capacity to influence policy agendas at all levels

Social cohesion and regeneration

- There is evidence of widespread racial harassment directed at ASRs
- Some existing BME communities are said to view the arrival of ASRs as a threat

- Social cohesion has improved in some of the previously low demand areas
- The local media tends to follow the model set by national media of sensationalism and scapegoating in its consideration of ASR issues. This can only impact negatively on social cohesion
- Resentment against AS may be driven by the belief that they are receiving preferential treatment particularly in relation to access to housing (Goodson and Phillimore 2005; Cower et al. 2003)
- There are concerns that placing large numbers of single young men in cluster areas may impact on social cohesion as local people find groups threatening (Cower et al. 2003)
- There are strong support networks between ASRs based upon ethnicity or house-sharing. Such individuals make good neighbours (see also Cower et al. 2003)
- ASRs could help to develop new ways to solve local problem but at present are rarely consulted on regeneration issues
- ASRs may be occupying poor quality accommodation which would otherwise be empty and perhaps be cleared to make way for new development
- The pressure placed on local services by ASRs may push some people into using services outside their local area (Cower et al. 2003)
- In areas that are designated NDC areas the presence of large numbers of refugees might undermine the achievement of targets because their level of need is so great (Cower et al. 2003)

The large number of ASRs, particularly in dispersal areas, has proved a major challenge for service providers. In summary most organisations experienced difficulties with language provision, the length of time it took to deal with the complex nature of ASR's problems, ASRs' lack of understanding of the fundamentals of the UK health, housing, education and employment systems and the lack of resources to increase or tailor service provision. There is a need for all organisations involved in supporting ASRs to collect information about the numbers of ASRs using their service and the proportion of their time they are spending supporting ASRs. Without the collection of such data they will be unable to demonstrate the need for further funds to support their work. Research has demonstrated that most pressure was placed upon service providers during, and after, the 28-day transition period. The Government intends to pilot a new approach to supporting refugee integration known as Sunrise. Bids will be invited from voluntary sector organisations who will undertake intensive one to one work with new refugees during the 28 day transition period. Each participating refugee will be helped to produce a Personal Integration Plan. Some degree of support will be provided after the 28 day period. Sunrise workers may help to alleviate the burden on Neighbourhood Offices and Refugee Community Organisations and help refugees gain access to accurate information about housing options. However it is unclear at this stage how many Sunrise workers will be funded and what areas will benefit from the pilots.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Significant numbers of asylum seekers and refugees have entered the region since 2000. When considering these numbers in relation to the overall population of the West Midlands the impact on the regional population is small. However the evidence presented in this study demonstrates that the ASR population tends to be concentrated in a relatively small number of wards. The impact on housing markets and services in these key ASR wards has been profound. Many of the wards were low demand areas before the advent of NASS contracts. Subsequently house prices have begun to rise and there are fewer voids. An improvement in social cohesion has been reported in some areas although there are anecdotal reports of growing levels of dissatisfaction and racism with the situation amongst the indigenous and multi-cultural residents in other areas. There is no doubt that any drastic reductions in the size of NASS contracts or withdrawal of these contracts will have an enormous impact in these areas. Such eventualities will need to be handled carefully by the relevant local authorities. Private landlords could be encouraged perhaps through incentives to retain a proportion of their stock to use as refugee move on accommodation. Local authority housing on estates that have been used to house asylum seekers over the past five years could perhaps also be used to house refugees in permanent tenancies following the Heath Town model. This would help ease the stress on the emergency accommodation system and provide refugees with some stability with which they could work towards self-sufficiency. Certainly it would be wise to resist encouraging the acquisition of any further units to house asylum seekers and instead focus on provision of housing for the region's growing numbers of refugees.

Whilst refugees are churning around the dispersal areas in response to housing crises they will be unable to contemplate other issues such as learning or employment. The HMRA study revealed that refugees in this situation were experiencing high levels of frustration with "the system". In terms of social cohesion such frustration and resultant alienation can only be counter productive in the long term. Measures are needed to help refugees settle as soon as possible. There also needs to be greater recognition that integration starts from the moment of arrival in the region. The advent of refugees in some of the most deprived parts of the region has certainly impacted on the nature of the regeneration challenge. Care is needed to ensure that refugees' can use their skills, experiences and ideas to aid regeneration. Refugees are recognised to be skilful and resourceful but need to be offered some prospects to become self-sufficient and move away from the dependency model which leads them to feel demotivated and local people to view refugees as a burden rather than an opportunity. At the present time the majority of refugees have little choice but to focus on surviving on a daily basis. They have few chances to shape the future of their area.

The sheer numbers of ASRs in dispersal clusters and the wide-ranging and complex nature of the problems they experience have placed considerable pressure on service providers in these areas. Evidence from the LSC studies has suggested that many ASRs are unaware of how basic UK systems operate so either fail to use services they need until in crisis or use services inappropriately. Service providers struggle because of a lack of resources, lack of specialist knowledge about ASR issues and the absence of a central source of information about rights and entitlements and how to provide support to ASRs. The Government's rationale is that it is inappropriate to provide specialist services for refugees and while they recognise the stress placed upon services, are seeking to mainstream refugee support by providing the Sunrise workers to help refugees access existing services. Previous research indicates that some specialist provision is required to help refugees to settle, integrate and become economically

self-sufficient. Such support should start with provision of support to locate suitable, safe, housing.

Once securely housed refugees will be in a better position to become economically active. Many of them have much to offer in terms of skills, qualifications and motivation but will need support in terms of APL programmes, work based learning, work experience and specialist ESOL provision. Service providers need to work closely with RCOs to develop appropriate initiatives. Resourcing such initiatives is challenging. A starting point is collection of data by all agencies about the numbers of ASRs being served and the challenges that working with ASRs are placing on organisations. Unless dispersal cluster areas are able to demonstrate the extent of need it will be difficult to convince DWP and ODPM of the necessity of further funds. Realistically such funding may have to be found locally and regionally. Given the negative media about asylum it may not be politically expedient to set up ASR specific initiatives but the long-term alternative in terms of economic activity rates and issues around social cohesion could ultimately be far more problematic and costly.

Recommendations⁹

Housing Provision

1. Development of move on accommodation for asylum seekers receiving positive decisions – *RHB to co-ordinate*
 - Develop a bond scheme and work with private landlords – *L/A*
 - Although some RSLs are providing housing for refugees others need to be more accessible and RSLs need to work together to explore what can be offered for refugees – *HC and Accommodate*
 - Work with private landlords to develop an exit strategy from NASS accommodation – *L/A*
2. Avoid pushing refugees into homelessness to find accommodation solutions. Plan for permanent provision – *RHB/ Homelessness strategy*.

Information, Advice and Guidance

2. Expand floating support provided by Supporting People to a wider range of refugees living in any tenure – *SP regional group*
3. Provision of refugee housing advisers to help new refugees locate suitable accommodation – *RHB to fund dedicated posts within housing departments of key L/As*
4. Provide all ASRs with a guide to locating housing – *RHB to fund Trinity to produce in conjunction with RCO ie WARS*

⁹ Suggestions for implementation are made in *italics*

5. Placing housing officers within RCOs to offer housing surgeries
- L/A
6. Give all ASRs information about how to use local services on arrival to the region – AWM/RHB to fund L/As to produce (will also be of use to other newcomers)
7. Provide training to help RCOs deliver housing support services
- HC
8. Encourage Neighbourhood Offices to explain processes and options behind locating suitable housing so refugees understand the applications process. Also housing officers to offer course of action to unsuccessful social housing applicants – RHB to fund Trinity to work with L/As and RCO to develop a code of practice

Ways of working

9. Service providers need to be responsive to diversity in service provision and in monitoring service delivery. Particular consideration needs to be given to gender provision- *guidelines produced regionally by refugee networks with CRE*
10. Greater multi-agency working perhaps following the models being developed under HACT's Accommodate programme – *RHB to co-ordinate in conjunction with Refugee Networks*
11. Sub-regional implementation groups need to continue to listen to the voices of ASRs as the regional homelessness strategy is implemented – *Homelessness Strategy*
12. Work with NASS to expand the length of the transition period – *RHB and L/As to lobby*
13. Home Office should be asked to clarify the role of accommodation providers, one stops shops and local housing authorities is in term of their provision of advice and housing. NASS should be encouraged to evaluate the extent to which obligations are being met – *WMCARS to facilitate*

Regeneration and renewal

14. Need to carefully monitor the impact of market renewal on ASR groups who were able to access housing when demand was low... is this changing? - *HMRAs*
15. Local authorities should work with HMRAs to develop plans to deal with the impact of any loss of ASR accommodation on surrounding areas – *HMRA/L/As*
16. Explore the possibility of self-build programmes bringing together the skills of refugees to help regenerate run down

dispersal areas and foster community cohesion - *NDC and HMRA*s

Other services

Information

17. All services need to collect data regarding the numbers of ASRs using their services and amount of resources directed to serving ASRs - *RHB /GOWM to co-ordinate*
18. There is a need for a central source of information about the rights and entitlements of ASRs - *RHB explore LSC progress*

Ways of working

19. ASR issues need to be included as core parts of all service planning including neighbourhood renewal, housing, social services, education and health - *L/As, LEAs, Health Authorities etc. RHB should encourage the nomination of a person in each service to take the lead on ASR issues*
20. Service providers should work with RCOs to gauge the nature of need in the ASR communities - *all key services to engage with refugee networks*
21. Need for more provision like Wardlow Road Centre- to access housing and related advice and to augment existing provision in conjunction with RCOs - *L/As to re-circulate profits from NASS contracts into provision*
22. RCOs need to tap into the Local Strategic Partnership agenda to work towards bridging the gaps between different organisations and communities - *LSPs*
23. Service providers would find it useful to have a database of RCOs and specialist providers across the region - *WMCARS with funding from RHB/ Home Office - can have access to CURS data*
24. Explore methods to build the capacity of RCOs to influence policy agendas at local and regional levels -
25. Work with RCOs to develop social enterprises, possibly based around housing services

Learning

26. Some specialist provision is necessary because of the complex nature of difficulties that ASRs experience this is particularly the case in relation to ESOL related to vocations, support into employment and mental health issues - *AWM, LSCs, Regional Skills Partnership, JCP and Health Authorities.*

27. Citizenship programmes should include a great deal of basic information on how the different UK systems work and what refugees can expect in terms of support. They might also include training on the protocols for dealing with service providers in a civil manner – *LSCs to direct colleges*
28. There is also a need for a work experience and APL programme in the region – *AWM and LSC to fund. Focus on construction skills in HMRAAs funded by HMRAAs and RHB*

Research

There is a need for further research on a number of issues

29. All local authorities and RSLs should be encouraged to collect data on how many refugees are presenting as homeless, claiming Housing Benefit, and being allocated housing. It is important to ensure that the data is collected and then collated at regional level – *RHB to commission the development of a model*
30. Research is needed to explore ways of assessing and recording the levels and impact of ASRs on services - *RHB*
31. Research is needed into successful approaches to provision of move on accommodation, particularly where refugees have moved into predominantly white areas or where choice based lettings are offered - *RHB*
32. Explore in greater detail the means by which refugees could be encouraged to move into low demand social housing in the vicinity of cluster areas - *RHB*
33. Data needs to be collated about incidence of racial harassment against ASRs in the region to explore the levels of harassment and the situations in which incidents occur – *RHB with support from RECs*
34. Explore the ways in which refugees skills could be used to help regenerate dispersal areas through the development of work based learning and APL models – *RHM, AWM, LSCs, HO*
35. There is a need for survey work to examine the aspirations and needs of refugees living outside the Birmingham Sandwell HMRA particularly regarding plans for movement across the region - *RHB*
36. There is a need for a review of Supporting People to examine the kinds of initiatives that are working - *ODPM*
37. Local housing needs studies should ensure that attention is given to exploring refugee housing needs – *L/As directed by RHB*

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Appendices

Table A1: method of calculating number of determinations

Assume 73% of cases decided after 2 months, remainder after 6 months. Based on a positive decision rate of 34% (average 2003/4) and the assumption that all bed spaces are immediately replaced.

	Start	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total with right to remain
NASS dispersed cases decision	6439			4700		3431		2505		1829		1335		

after 2mths													
Above getting right to remain			1598		1167		852		622		454		4693
NASS dispersed cases decision after 6mths							1739		1269		926		
Above getting right to remain							591		431		315		1337
Interim	1181												
Support only 2mths	1232		899		657		431		315		230		
Above getting right to remain			306		223		147		107		78		861
Support only 6mths							333		243		177		
Above getting right to remain							113		83		60		256