



Home Office

# Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration

A draft for consultation

July 2004



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**FOREWORD BY DES BROWNE MP,  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR IMMIGRATION**

## An invitation to contribute

The world is changing faster than ever before. Globalisation, increased longevity, technical progress and mass migration are among the major phenomena of our time and will affect all our futures. As a government, we are committed to changing Britain for the better – while at the same time preserving the best of the old. And the welcome that Britain has always extended to refugees from persecution around the world is one of the proudest elements of our tradition.

But the new blood represented by refugees can be a real source of strength to Britain in our changing world. Many refugees have skills, talents and enthusiasm that can be real assets to Britain if we can help them make the most use of them. But to give of their best, they have to be able to integrate with the host society as quickly and smoothly as possible.

The government has a vision of a successful, integrated society that recognises and celebrates the strength in our diversity. In May we launched a wide-ranging consultation exercise which will lead to a cross-government community cohesion and race equality strategy that will help us to achieve that vision. We recognise that there are challenges that we have to overcome to make this a reality: the impact of exclusion and racism, the rise in political and religious extremism and segregation that can divide our communities. We want to find practical ways to overcome these challenges, building on the considerable progress that has been made.

This is the second national strategy for refugee integration for England. It will take over from *Full and Equal Citizens*, which we published in 2000, and complements the wider strategy on community cohesion and race equality that we are also developing. It offers a fuller analysis of the concept of integration and the ways in which central and local government, the voluntary sector and the private sector can promote it. It brings together major developments over the intervening period: the publication of the report of the *Life in the UK* Advisory Group, the development of the National Asylum Support Service's new accommodation strategy for asylum seekers,

and our new proposals for a tailored programme to help new refugees produce Personal Integration Plans.

This strategy has largely been shaped by the National Refugee Integration Forum, which brings together a wide range of people from all over the country who have in common a professional concern with the welfare of refugees. But now we want wider comments. Naturally, we think that the strategy is right in its basic essentials. But we want to expose it to a broader audience so that we can take on board as wide a range of comments and suggestions as possible when we come to produce the final version.

Many questions will suggest themselves to readers of this strategy. To suggest just a few, these will include:

- How can the new Sunrise caseworking programme best be co-ordinated with existing work, ensuring that we build on it rather than duplicate it?
- What will be the best way of ensuring that the new Refugee Integration Loans genuinely meet refugees' long-term integration needs?
- When piloting the Sunrise programme, which areas would be most suitable to choose?
- Are we suggesting the right indicators to measure the success of our integration policies?
- How can we improve the integration of refugee children in school?
- What else can be done to make refugees feel safe in their communities?
- What more can be done to ensure that refugees with professional qualifications can find employment that makes the best use of their skills?
- How can we build up the role of refugee community organisations?
- How can we improve the readiness of people to work with refugees as mentors?
- What more needs to be done to make public services accessible to refugees?

Foreword

**INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

We will welcome your views on these or any other relevant questions that you wish to raise. We are making three months available for this, after which we will publish the final version of this strategy. Please, therefore, send any comments you may have to Cilla Pegg at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, 6th Floor, Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 3RR, or to Priscilla.Pegg@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

I look forward to learning your reactions to the strategy and to the opportunity to work with you to make it even stronger.

**Des Browne MP**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Executive summary****Chapter 1: Introduction: What is integration?**

The UK has a heritage of welcoming refugees in which it can take pride. And refugees can make a huge contribution to the enrichment of our national life. A genuinely strategic approach to the integration of refugees is in the interests of the host population and of refugees themselves. This is a strategy for the integration of refugees, and both terms require some explanation. By ‘refugees’, we mean people who have been recognised as such (as opposed to asylum seekers, whose claims are still under consideration) together with those who have been granted discretionary leave or humanitarian protection. By ‘integration’, we mean the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute fully to the community, and to become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents. This strategy takes forward and amplifies the policies set out in *Full and Equal Citizens*, which was published in 2000, and it should be seen in the context of, and as an important contribution to, the work of the Government and other public bodies in promoting good race relations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002. It is tailored specifically to English circumstances: there is already a Scottish strategy, on which we have drawn, and there will be a Welsh strategy in due course.

**Chapter 2: Defining the challenge**

Refugees have very specific needs as a result of their experiences and circumstances, and service providers must identify these needs and develop ways of meeting them. The cross-cutting problems that must be addressed typically relate to:

- the provision of information, and knowing where to get it from;
- the stability of service provision;
- collecting accurate data; and
- keeping in contact with refugees.

In addition to these issues, in order to **achieve their full potential**, refugees face the

challenges of communicating effectively in the host community’s language and of gaining employment appropriate to their abilities and skills. The solutions lie in the provision of opportunities for language training, early contact with Jobcentre Plus, acquisition of work experience, retraining and re-accreditation where necessary, and commitment and openness from employers.

To **contribute to the community** as fully as possible, personal safety is a prerequisite, while negative stereotypes can create artificial barriers between refugees and host populations. Refugee community organisations (RCOs) can play a pivotal role in bridge-building, but too often lack resources. Unaccompanied refugee children need special support.

In gaining **access to public services**, early contact is essential where it has not already been made before refugee status is gained. The issues that need to be addressed here include shortages of appropriate housing and the need for medical assessments where there is no previous NHS record, and we need to ensure that schools are equipped to meet refugee children’s needs.

**Chapter 3: Mobilising our resources**

Many organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors play crucial roles in refugee integration. The lead in government is taken by the Home Office’s Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), while the government departments responsible for social benefits, employment, health, housing and education are all fully associated with it. At the regional level, the 13 Consortia for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support, all of which either have or are working towards their own refugee integration strategies, provide the necessary links between central government, local government and voluntary sector services that are of vital importance to refugees.

Crucial work on behalf of refugees is carried out by the voluntary sector. Many of the national voluntary sector organisations working in this field are core-funded by the Home Office, while RCOs and other community-based support groups, often relying entirely on volunteer effort, are

uniquely well placed to build the confidence of their own community. There are also many foster links with the wider community, and there are many examples of private sector contributions to refugee integration achieved through adherence to good practice, particularly in the employment and housing sectors.

The Cabinet Committee on the social and economic aspects of migration ensures co-ordination of all these contributions at the highest level of government. Closer to working level, the National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF), chaired by the Minister of State for Immigration, brings together representatives of central and local government, and the voluntary sector, to discuss the direction of policy; its nine sub-groups provide a unique practical perspective on the most important aspects of the integration process, contributing to the strategic planning and delivery of services to refugees.

Three funding programmes administered by the Home Office provide vital resources for the work of the voluntary sector in particular. The Refugee Community Development Fund, the Challenge Fund and the European Refugee Fund totalled £11 million in 2003/04 and between them contributed to nearly 90 projects. The evaluations of these projects will in turn help to build up our knowledge of cost-effective approaches to refugee integration.

#### Chapter 4: Progress so far

Much has already been achieved under the aegis of the 2000 strategy *Full and Equal Citizens*, both in terms of improved knowledge of the problem and of specific actions taken. In terms of **achieving full potential**, important initiatives have included the development of the Department for Work and Pensions' refugee employment strategy, improved documentation which makes it easier for refugees to find employment, work to make it easier for medically qualified refugees to find employment in the health field, the production of a *Refugee Handbook* for English-language teachers working with refugees, and numerous voluntary sector initiatives.

On **contributing to communities**, the main developments have included improvements to arrangements for reporting racist attacks, the production of fact sheets and media packs to promote balanced coverage of refugee issues, capacity-building for refugee community organisations, and the introduction of citizenship ceremonies. In **accessing public services**, the key initiatives have included the provision of advice services offering support to refugees through the move-on period, improvements in healthcare information available to doctors working with refugees, and the provision of support services to meet the needs of refugee children in schools.

On all sides of the strategy, practical work has been underpinned by research, whether conducted by the Government, the academic community, or the voluntary sector: their findings and recommendations have been crucial in taking the policy agenda forward.

#### Chapter 5: Delivering new solutions

Although much has already been achieved, further improvements to the strategy can be made. The Government has proposed legislation which will create a 'local connection' under housing law so that new refugees who have been supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) will remain in their dispersal areas if they need homelessness assistance, thus improving the planning of services.

A major new initiative will be to pilot a Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services (Sunrise), which will test an approach under which each new refugee who chooses to participate will work with a caseworker to produce a Personal Integration Plan. The plan will be produced during the 28-day period following receipt of refugee status and will include referral to employment help, housing needs, access to other public services, English-language tuition where needed, opportunities for volunteering and for being mentored, and contacts with cultural or faith communities if sought.

The Personal Integration Plan will also set out the use to be made of the Refugee Integration Loan, if the refugee wishes to use this opportunity. The loan will be financed from the abolition of back-payments of Income Support to those granted refugee status, and will be available for use in ways that promote long-term integration.

The Sunrise programme will be delivered by the voluntary sector, working under contract to the Government. It will be piloted in one region in the course of 2005, with national roll-out scheduled to follow if the approach proves its value.

At the same time, the Government intends to provide a further push towards integration of all permanent migrants to the UK, not just refugees, by implementing the citizenship provisions of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Based on the principles laid down in the report of the *Life in the UK* Advisory Group, chaired by Professor Sir Bernard Crick, the new system will ensure

that people applying for British citizenship are developing their knowledge of English and of what it means to be a citizen of Britain today.

#### **Chapter 6: Taking integration forward**

Integration is a complex process and its achievement can be measured in many different ways, but for the purposes of this strategy eight indicators have been selected as being of the most importance, covering each of the three themes: achieving full potential; contributing to communities; and accessing public services. The indicators relate to employment, English-language attainment, volunteering, contact with community organisations, take-up of British citizenship, the proportion of refugees reporting racial, cultural or religious harassment, housing standards, and educational success. Progress against these indicators will be measured through a longitudinal survey of refugees and other migrants conducted by the Home Office, and reports will be published periodically, the first in about 18 months time.

Chapter 1

**INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INTEGRATION?**

**1.1** For many centuries, Britain has had a proud reputation as a country where people fleeing harsh treatment for their political or religious views can find safe refuge and build a new life. British jurists took a leading role in drawing up the 1951 Geneva Convention on the status of refugees, which still sets out the legal principles to which we, and virtually all other democracies, undertake to adhere.

**1.2** Today, our commitment to that heritage is as strong as ever. Between 1992 and 2002, just under 238,000 people (including dependent children) were granted refugee status or exceptional leave to remain in the UK. Most of them were from countries that saw terrible violence and suffering during that period: Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

**1.3** Refugees in this country face real problems, and they pose real challenges for public services. But it would be wrong to think of them as a problem in themselves. They bring a wide range of experience and skills, many of which are much needed, and the process of integration will enable them to use these to benefit themselves and our communities.

**1.4** This strategy, which supersedes and amplifies the 2000 policy document *Full and Equal Citizens*, sets out the actions the Government is taking and will take to help drive the process of integration forward. It has been written in the light of the duty on the Government, and on all public bodies, to work for the promotion of good race relations, which was introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002. Indeed, it seeks to provide a major contribution to the fulfilment of that duty. The strategy formally applies in England only. Scotland already has its own refugee integration strategy, tailored to its own circumstances, which has been of great value in drawing up this one. Work is going ahead on a Welsh strategy. The devolved administrations and the Whitehall departments have a great deal to learn from each other in this field and meet frequently to ensure that policies and programmes are fully co-ordinated.

### Who is the strategy for?

**1.5** First, it is important to define the people who come within the scope of this strategy. It covers the integration of refugees. By this we mean people who have been recognised as refugees and those who have been granted discretionary leave or humanitarian protection. That definition in turn depends on the terms of the 1951 United Nations Convention on the status of refugees, which is the basis of British law on this subject and defines a refugee as someone who has ‘a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it’.

**1.6** It follows that this integration strategy does not cover asylum seekers whose applications are either still being considered or have been rejected. While the Government does accept that the experiences of asylum seekers before they are recognised as refugees will affect their later integration in a number of ways, it believes that integration in the full sense of the word can take place only when a person has been confirmed as a refugee and can make plans on the basis of a long-term future in the UK.

**1.7** Nor does the strategy cover other migrants who are either long-term or permanent residents in the UK. The circumstances and experiences of refugees are distinctive. Refugees by definition have suffered or have feared persecution; they are likely to have lost everything in their home countries; and they are less likely than other migrants to have jobs and support services arranged for them by employers or relatives.

### What is integration?

**1.8** There is a wide range of academic literature on integration, much of which has contributed to the thinking behind this strategy (the bibliography sets out some of the most important contributions). Our definition of integration for refugees is, however, a simple one.

**1.9** Integration takes place when refugees are empowered to:

- achieve their full potential as members of British society;
- contribute fully to the community; and
- access the public services to which they are entitled.

**1.10** These three themes – achieving potential, contributing to the community and accessing services – are fundamental to the delivery of this strategy, and they will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

**1.11** This strategy does not assume that refugees are a homogeneous group. Refugees are, above all, individuals, with complex and diverse backgrounds, skills and qualities. The strategy is relevant to all refugees, but particularly to those who have arrived in this country relatively recently and are at the beginning of the process of social integration.

### **Aims of the strategy**

**1.12** The aim of this strategy is to support and enable refugees to integrate swiftly. Ultimately, the strategy seeks to help as many refugees as possible take up citizenship of the UK if they wish, while recognising that some will be able to return to their countries of origin if circumstances change. Durable solutions will be an important measure of the success of our integration policies in the long term.

**1.13** The key challenges have not changed since publication of *Full and Equal Citizens* in November 2000, but, largely thanks to the work of the NRIF, our understanding of the barriers faced by refugees and service providers is now deeper and more comprehensive, and our knowledge of what works in addressing those barriers is now much better developed.

**1.14** Mainstreaming the support provided to refugees, as set out in *Full and Equal Citizens*, remains at the heart of our approach. This means providing the necessary support to refugees within services designed for everyone,

like the NHS or the schools system, rather than setting up separate services or structures to meet their needs. Those services must, therefore, be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of individual refugees, as they must for any other eligible member of the community.

**1.15** But we need to move further forward. Individual, local and national solutions are still needed to address some issues, and regional strategic planning is needed to take into account circumstances specific to different parts of the country.

**1.16** This strategy sets out the action that the Government will take to make further progress. It sits squarely within the framework created by the 2003 White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*, which explained how we are reforming the asylum system to bring about a swifter and more effective process to identify genuine refugees and remove others. It also announced plans for accommodation centres, which have the potential to provide a head start in the integration of residents who gain refugee status.

**1.17** And further reforms are also being made to the services provided to asylum seekers by NASS. Most of NASS's accommodation contracts expire in 2005 and are currently being renegotiated. At the same time, NASS is reorganising itself to deliver more of its services through regional offices. These changes offer important opportunities to get the integration of successful asylum seekers under way.

**1.18** So this strategy should not be seen in isolation. It seeks to work alongside the wider reforms that the Government is making, both in the immigration field and in other key public services, and to show how the same determination to deliver positive outcomes can meet the needs of refugees.

Chapter 2  
**DEFINING THE CHALLENGE**

**2.1** The first step towards the integration of refugees must be to identify and help with their most pressing needs. Finding and settling them into safe and appropriate housing, accessing employment or social security support, addressing any health concerns, and getting children settled in school are crucial to enabling refugees to focus on the longer-term aspects of integration.

**2.2** Some refugees may arrive in poor health, and some health conditions may not become apparent until after they have been in the UK for a period of time – not least because some refugees may be apprehensive about discussing their health while their status in the UK is uncertain. And refugees who have experienced trauma and suffering before their arrival in the UK will require long-term support.

**2.3** Again, if the education of refugee children has been disrupted, their support needs in school will differ from those of other children, especially where the educational system of their home country was very different from that in Britain (as is usually the case).

**2.4** The experiences of refugees during their stay in the UK as asylum seekers will also have a significant bearing on the type of support that is needed. A large number of refugees will have received NASS support, which provides a structured and supported environment with ready access to advice and services, but others will have received subsistence-only support and some may not have qualified for NASS support. Some, in the future, will be housed in accommodation centres while their asylum applications are being considered, while others will come to the UK direct from their home regions through the Gateway Protection Programme.

**2.5** Many challenges to the delivery of this strategy apply to all three themes identified in chapter 1: achieving full potential, contributing to communities, and accessing public services. These cross-cutting challenges include the need for:

- easy access to up-to-date information about what services are available, and how to contact them;

### **The Gateway Protection Programme**

Most refugees reach the United Kingdom after difficult and arduous journeys from their countries of origin. But for many refugees, often caught up in some of the world's worst conflicts, the possibility of fleeing to the UK never arises because they simply do not have the resources to pay for the journey.

As the number of asylum seekers reaching the UK by illegal means steadily declines in response to the firm action taken by the Government, a new programme – the Gateway Protection Programme – has been set up to bring modest numbers of refugees who urgently need help to the UK to start a new life. The UK therefore joins a number of other Western countries who have for some years run similar programmes under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The first group of 69 refugees arrived in Sheffield in spring 2004, fleeing from conflicts in West Africa, and often having lived in makeshift refugee camps for many years. They are already beginning to adjust well to life in the UK.

The Gateway Protection Programme is run as a partnership between the Home Office, the host local authorities, the voluntary sector agencies who co-ordinate the programme, and Jobcentre Plus. The programme is testimony to the UK's continuing commitment to the protection of the most vulnerable refugees in the modern world.

- stability of service delivery, in the interests both of refugees themselves and of other service users; and
- comprehensive and accurate data in order to assess and plan the provision of services, including ways of preventing people from falling through the safety net after confirmation of their refugee status, perhaps because they have not been living in managed accommodation.

**2.6** Valuable as it is to analyse the problem in terms of the three themes, it is equally important to bear the existence of these cross-cutting challenges in mind.

### **Achieving full potential**

**2.7** Refugees, like other individuals, have a diversity of talents, and therefore a wide range of ways to achieve their full potential. But two factors are overwhelmingly important: the ability to communicate effectively in English and gaining employment appropriate to their abilities and skills.

**2.8** Since the publication of *Full and Equal Citizens*, extensive research has been conducted into barriers faced by refugees in acquiring language skills and job experience. The two issues are closely related: for many, the inability to speak English is the main obstacle to taking up a job or finding employment that engages their skills fully.

**2.9** Unemployment among refugees is about six times the national average, despite the fact that refugees have on average higher levels of qualifications. They need to seek advice from Jobcentre Plus offices quickly after receipt of their asylum determination in order to access systematic support, training, advice and guidance in making informed choices.

**2.10** But that is only a first step. A wide range of organisations have developed expertise in helping refugees to find work: their contribution needs to be maximised and refugees themselves need help to understand the complex and changing landscape of the UK labour market.

### **Current challenges**

**2.11** On this analysis, the key needs facing most refugees in the employment and training fields are:

- clear documentation of their status, provided quickly after their asylum determination, and for that documentation to be clear and widely recognised by employers, Jobcentre Plus offices and banks;
- information about programmes and training available through Jobcentre Plus offices and elsewhere;
- the availability of English-language classes and flexibility of class times;

### **Department for Work and Pensions' strategy for refugee employment**

The *Refugee Employment Strategy*, which is to be published shortly, will set out the approach that the Department for Work and Pensions, with government and voluntary sector partners, will take to increase refugee employment.

The Sunrise caseworker pilot set out in chapter 5 will test a complementary approach that Jobcentre Plus is piloting for refugees. Jobcentre Plus is developing an operational framework that, among other things, will help front-line advisers to respond more appropriately to the needs of their refugee customers. They are piloting specialist refugee employment provision to help customers tackle a range of employment barriers. In the pilot areas, the Sunrise caseworkers will ensure that refugees attend their local Jobcentre Plus office as soon as possible, and they will work closely with Jobcentre Plus staff to understand what support they can give and will reflect this in the Personal Integration Plan.

We expect that refugees will become ready for work sooner as a result of the caseworker approach. By resolving potentially problematic issues, such as housing, soon after receipt of a positive asylum decision, we will enable refugees to focus on moving on with their lives.

- relevant or UK-based work experience (which could be gained through volunteering);
- a knowledge of specific working cultures (latest trends in education or the NHS, for example) as well as more general guidance on preparing a CV and interview techniques; and
- the need for structured routes for retraining and re-accreditation for those with professional skills, together with information about those options.

### **Contributing to the community**

**2.12** The dispersal of asylum seekers throughout the UK has created new communities of refugees and has made many communities more diverse. While this brings challenges to local areas, particularly because of a lack of familiarity and understanding between new and existing communities, it can also bring real social, cultural and economic benefits.

**2.13** In order for refugees to contribute to all aspects of community life, they must feel safe and secure, particularly against racial harassment and racially motivated violence. Experiences of insecurity or victimisation can make it virtually impossible for people to play an active part in the community.

**2.14** Host communities also need support: they are entitled to receive fair and accurate information about refugees from government and the media. To ensure that refugees are able to integrate, steps must be taken to maximise the potential for new and positive relationships between refugees and members of the settled population, which will work to everyone's benefit.

**2.15** The media can be a powerful force for understanding. But too often people hear of refugees only when some problem comes to light. Efforts are needed for a more balanced coverage by encouraging journalists to look for ways of presenting the many positives about the presence of refugees to the wider public.

But those efforts must not be made in a way that seeks to dictate to the media about their handling of these issues.

**2.16** The development of inter-community relationships is a driving force for integration. There are many opportunities to strengthen participation and involvement of refugees and RCOs in their local communities, with their local authorities and in community partnerships and initiatives. RCOs are a crucial resource where they exist, especially in bridging links with the wider public, deriving their strength not only from refugees' strong impulse to self-help, independence and the desire to make a positive contribution to the society that has provided refuge, but also from the unique resources of their members, such as language skills and understanding of community needs. While they are typically run on a low budget, many have developed a high level of professional competence.

**2.17** The key challenges in this part of the strategy are therefore:

- to prevent racial harassment faced by some refugees through better public awareness and community relations, and, when it does occur, to encourage victims to report it, provide support and deal effectively with the alleged perpetrators;
- to encourage alternative approaches to stereotyped and over-simplified portrayals of refugees, and better understanding of the issues they face;
- to build the capacity of RCOs, most of which depend on volunteer effort and other resources of their members;
- to improve the ability of RCOs to move towards sustainability by accessing funding and support, not least by ensuring that application procedures are accessible; and
- to support unaccompanied refugee children (see boxed text next page) in building links with members of their national or ethnic community, and with the wider local community, in order to prevent isolation and social exclusion.

### **Unaccompanied refugee children**

Unaccompanied refugee children are often called the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. In having been separated from their parents and wider family, they have been cut adrift from all support: emotional, practical and financial. Many unaccompanied refugee children arrive in the UK as a result of their families having extricated them from dangerous situations in their country of origin. Their first objective in this country must therefore be to recover both physically and emotionally.

But for these children to reach a point where they feel accepted as an equal part of British society, they face not only the hurdles other refugees experience, but also the daunting challenge of growing up without their parents.

For unaccompanied refugee children, the statutory sector takes on the role of their primary carer, responsible for their welfare, safety and education, and so the support structures that have been designed primarily to meet their needs as children need also to meet their needs as unaccompanied refugees and address the intense isolation and social exclusion that they can face.

Unaccompanied refugee children can and do succeed, but to do so they need a stable base from which to integrate, and for this a living environment that offers support, stability and encouragement is essential.

### **Access to services**

**2.18** Virtually all refugees are likely to need some help in enabling them to contact and use the services to which they are entitled. That help must be provided in a timely way, particularly during the critical period after receipt of a positive decision on asylum.

**2.19** A primary aim must be to prevent homelessness among refugees, to ensure that they have access to suitable housing, dealing with any problems caused by the move from NASS or other accommodation to mainstream support, and to sustain refugee households in their homes in the longer term.

**2.20** Refugees should have access to mainstream health and social care, and health professionals require support to understand and respond to the needs of refugees and their families.

**2.21** A key challenge in education is to ensure that schools can provide the education that refugee children need in order to succeed, including English-language support in ways that correspond to their special circumstances.

**2.22** The main challenges for this strand of the strategy are, therefore, to:

- help refugees find suitable accommodation, particularly if they are moving from NASS accommodation, which normally needs to be vacated within 28 days;
- ensure that refugees are in contact with the health services they need;
- ensure that professionals working with refugees have access to the necessary information about them;
- enable schools to meet the support needs of individual refugee children;
- provide those entrusted with the care of unaccompanied refugee children with the support necessary to meet the children's needs;
- help unaccompanied refugee children in particular to develop skills for living in the UK while maintaining links with their own national or ethnic communities; and
- enable refugee children to meet their long-term potential by participating in wider school life.

Chapter 3  
**MOBILISING OUR RESOURCES**

**3.1** A successful refugee integration strategy demands the commitment of an extremely wide range of agencies: from the public sector at central and local government levels, from the voluntary sector, and from private enterprise. This chapter sets out the roles assigned by the strategy to the key agencies, the mechanisms that exist to co-ordinate their efforts, and the relationship between these and the regional strategies that are now being produced and that will assume increased importance in the future.

### **The national level**

**3.2** Within the Government, refugee integration issues are co-ordinated by the Home Office's IND, which is responsible for monitoring this strategy and also:

- supports the work of the NRIF;
- administers the main funding programmes that support refugee integration; and
- ensures that refugee issues are fully considered in other government initiatives that may influence the conditions under which integration can take place, such as those which aim to promote employment,

social cohesion and neighbourhood renewal.

**3.3** Within IND, NASS plays a particularly important role in the lives of potential refugees, since most of them will have been supported by NASS while their applications for refugee status were being considered.

**3.4** Other parts of the Home Office, and other departments, also carry essential responsibilities. The Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are all fully committed to this strategy, to which they bring lead responsibilities for benefit and employment issues, education both of children and adults, health and social care needs, and creating sustainable communities respectively. There are also important links between this strategy and the work being done in the Home Office on promoting volunteering and community safety.

### **The Scottish integration strategy**

The Scottish Refugee Integration Forum's (SRIF's) action plan was published in February 2003 and is Scotland's equivalent of this strategy. It contains more than 50 key action points aimed at making a real difference to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. The action plan is Scotland-wide in its focus, with many of the actions relevant to any area where asylum seekers or refugees settle, although much of the work is concentrated on Glasgow, which has Scotland's only NASS contracts.

The SRIF was established in January 2002 with the remit to develop action plans to enable the successful integration of refugees in Scotland and the provision of more accessible, co-ordinated and good quality services. The SRIF was also asked to:

- consider all matters necessary to assist refugees in integrating into life in Scotland;
- collect and disseminate examples of good practice from around the country; and
- play a key role in promoting positive images of refugees as members of society.

An initial progress report on implementation of the action plan was published in August 2003, and a further progress report is planned for February 2005. A budget of £2.9 million was committed to implementation of the action plan in its first year, and a similar amount is being provided in 2004/05. In drawing up this strategy for England, full advantage has been taken of the many new initiatives contained in the Scottish action plan.

## **The regional dimension**

**3.5** As a national strategy, this document sets out the policies and programmes that will be common throughout England, but these common threads of action will always be supported and overlaid by more specifically local initiatives. Regional and local strategies are, therefore, a valuable supplement to the national framework set out in this document.

**3.6** Regional planning for integration is the responsibility of the regional Consortia for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support, which are multi-agency networks made up of local authorities, government offices, the police, health bodies, voluntary organisations and the private sector in the 11 regions of England, Wales and Scotland responsible for co-ordinating the provision of services by local authorities to NASS-supported asylum seekers. The West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, North East and East of England consortia have developed formal strategies for the integration of refugees in their regions.

**3.7** But the consortia need support in developing and implementing those strategies, and the strategies need to address the same framework of issues. The NRIF will therefore take on a co-ordinating role for local strategies, where appropriate, ensuring that the best aspects of each strategy are disseminated to other regions.

**3.8** NASS too is increasingly delivering its services through a network of regional offices, as well as through the 12 Consortia for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support, which are funded by the Home Office. This regional presence will provide the infrastructure for NASS's new service delivery plans, which will be implemented from 2005 on the expiry of the current accommodation contracts. These new arrangements will allow NASS to plan for the dispersal of asylum seekers with the benefit of much better knowledge of local conditions and problems; as successful asylum seekers are likely to stay in their original dispersal areas, this will make the process of integration much easier.

**3.9** At the sub-regional and local levels, and closely involved in the delivery of the new NASS strategy, there is a wide range of service providers with a strategic planning role. Local authorities, including local education authorities (LEAs) and social services, Learning and Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus, Regional Housing Boards and Primary Care Trusts, for example, all have a key role to play at the front line of delivering services, advice and support to refugees.

## **The voluntary and community sector**

**3.10** The voluntary sector already has an indispensable set of responsibilities in the delivery of services to refugees, and its work on refugee integration is very well respected. It is an overarching aim of government policy to increase the involvement of the voluntary sector in service delivery, and this strategy is intended to contribute to that aim.

**3.11** The Government's relationship with the voluntary sector is a partnership of equals, maintained in accordance with the principles set out in the Voluntary Sector Compact. In recognition of their essential roles, the Home Office provides core funding to a number of national and regional bodies working to promote refugees' welfare, including:

- British Refugee Council;
- Refugee Action;
- Scottish Refugee Council;
- Northern Refugee Centre;
- North of England Refugee Service;
- Refugees into Jobs;
- Welsh Refugee Council; and
- Midlands Refugee Council.

**3.12** Around £6 million is divided amongst core-funded organisations each year. They provide essential advice, advocacy and support services for refugees, as well as informing the public about refugee issues and contributing to the development of government policy.

**3.13** Refugee Action, for example, has been providing integration services for over 20 years, and is currently working with over 250 refugee community organisations and local communities, networks, forums and local partnerships to promote the integration of refugees in UK society.

**3.14** The enormously valuable work of RCOs in helping refugees to acclimatise to life in the UK has already been emphasised. Based on the self-help principle, and usually run on slender resources, they build links between refugees and the wider community and provide English-language training and employment support. They also offer expert advice to local, regional and national government on the problems faced by refugees in accessing services, achieving their full potential and contributing to communities. We want to boost the capacity of RCOs to undertake this work, particularly through the carefully targeted use of the government funding available for refugee integration work.

**3.15** Wider voluntary and community sector organisations, including smaller local and regional groups, are also well placed to promote refugee integration by providing volunteering opportunities and forging links with the wider community (both of which will be integral parts of the Personal Integration Plan described in chapter 5), as well as by acting as a source of practical help and moral support, befriending, and social and cultural activities.

### **The private sector**

**3.16** Private sector bodies contribute to the integration of refugees in a number of ways. For example, many NASS accommodation providers recognise a social responsibility to their clients, often providing practical advice and support to refugees in the days after receipt of their asylum determination, helping with move-on arrangements and signposting refugees to sources of support.

**3.17** The role of employers is crucial: not only by providing jobs, vital as that is, but also by enabling attendance at English-language classes through on-site or day-release schemes; by providing work placements for refugees

who are retraining; or simply by making sure that their recruitment and personnel practices are sensitive to wider diversity issues.

### **Co-ordinating the effort**

**3.18** With so many bodies involved in refugee integration, effective co-ordination is essential. At the highest level of government, policies are co-ordinated by the Cabinet's committee on migration, chaired by the Home Secretary, which meets several times a year to give direction to major policy developments in the whole field of migration, including all aspects of refugee integration.

### **The role of the NRIF**

**3.19** Closer to the level of the practitioner, however, the essential co-ordinating group is the NRIF. The NRIF was founded in January 2001 to bring together representatives from a range of organisations working with refugees, some of whom are themselves refugees. It is the essential link between national, regional and local problem-solving. Its primary role is to identify and propose solutions to the issues that refugees face. It meets in plenary session roughly every three months under the chairmanship of the Minister of State at the Home Office, but its most important work is done through its sub-group structure.

**3.20** Its nine sub-groups, all chaired by people with recognised expertise in their fields from outside central government, cover education, accommodation, health and social care, employment and training, community development, community safety, positive images, research and unaccompanied refugee children.

**3.21** The NRIF also provides an avenue (although not the only one) through which refugees themselves can represent their viewpoint to government, thus helping to ensure that policies are informed by the experience of the people whose needs they are designed to meet.

### **The major funding streams**

**3.22** Our strategy is based on the 'mainstreaming' of services for refugees. But

there are also important funding programmes targeted specifically to the needs of refugees.

**3.23** The Home Office administers three key funds that have been set up specifically to support refugee integration. The funding programmes have been in operation since 2001, and from this year onwards a more strategic management of the funds is being introduced, reducing the amount of bureaucracy involved in their administration, along with new arrangements to disseminate good practice more quickly and effectively.

#### Refugee Community Development Fund (RCDF)

**3.24** The RCDF provides capacity-building funding for small refugee community organisations, which are generally run by volunteers and provide vital services and support to refugee communities. Grants of up to £5,000 are made to organisations for capacity-building, provision of new services, and building community relations. Only one grant is made to an organisation in any financial year.

#### Challenge Fund (CF)

**3.25** The CF was established in 2001 to support the implementation of *Full and Equal Citizens*. It will make £3 million available in 2004 to innovative projects that address specific social needs among refugee communities. The CF is open to voluntary and community-based organisations and public bodies (local authorities and Primary Care Trusts, for example). Commercial organisations can apply as part of partnership bids.

**3.26** Although there is no fixed limit on the level of grant available to projects, the Home Office guidance makes it clear that applications should normally be in the range of £20,000 to £50,000. The CF is able to fund 100 per cent of project costs for a maximum of 12 months.

#### European Refugee Fund (ERF)

**3.27** The ERF was established by a decision of the European Union in 2000. It delegated to Member States the power to implement

initiatives to support refugees in three main areas:

- providing appropriate reception conditions;
- encouraging social and economic integration; and
- enabling refugees to return home, if they wish to do so.

**3.28** The ERF is subject to the same rules on eligibility as the CF, in that voluntary and community-based organisations and public bodies may bid directly for funding, and private bodies may participate as partners. This year, £7.5 million is available for UK activities on refugee integration. There is no fixed limit in place but successful applications are typically between £30,000 and £80,000. The ERF generally makes available grants of up to 50 per cent of the project's total costs, and, again, funding is available for a maximum of 12 months.

**3.29** In the financial year 2002/03, an estimated 12,000 refugees and asylum seekers were assisted by projects funded by the ERF. In total, ERF-funded projects employ more than 140 full-time equivalent staff and around 80 volunteers.

### Evaluation

**3.30** The Invest to Save Budget has funded 400 innovative projects – mainly with a technological element – since 1998. This Budget has now been renamed the 'Invest to Save – Inclusive Communities Budget' and will be refocused so as to concentrate on building inclusive communities and local partnerships. In recognition of the vital role communities play in integrating refugees and other migrants, from 2005/06 migrant integration will be one of the priorities for this budget. Bids for funding will be invited from voluntary and community organisations promoting English language skills, integration among migrants and employment for people from ethnic minorities.

**3.31** All bids should:

- identify innovative ways of delivering and improving public services;

- explain how they would reduce the cost of delivering public services and/or improve the quality and effectiveness of services delivered to the public; and
- take action to disseminate lessons from their project.

Further details on how to apply to ‘Invest to Save – Inclusive Communities’ are available at [www.isb.gov.uk](http://www.isb.gov.uk)

**3.32** The Home Office undertakes a detailed evaluation of the Challenge Fund and the European Refugee Fund, looking at every project that receives funding. The main aims of the evaluation are to:

- assess the progress of projects in meeting their stated goals, as well as the wider impacts they may have;
- identify detailed good practice principles and provide plans for their implementation;
- identify common obstacles to progress across projects;
- understand and assess processes within projects that lead to efficient service delivery;

- devise project-specific indicators to allow those running projects to carry out self-assessment;
- analyse projects in terms of their costs and benefits; and
- make proposals for change in project assessment, support and management systems.

**3.33** As part of a wider evaluation of the schemes, MORI carried out a survey of a selection of projects’ clients in 2002/03, in conjunction with Michael Bell Associates. The survey found that the projects it explored had delivered real benefits to their users and were operating effectively in their own terms. But the survey also stressed that the service users were extremely disadvantaged, even after two or three years of residence in the UK. The findings demonstrated that interventions such as those delivered by the projects funded by the ERF and the CF are vitally needed, but equally pointed to the need to place them within the context of a strategy designed to address all aspects of the problems faced by refugees.

Chapter 4  
**PROGRESS SO FAR**

**4.1** *Full and Equal Citizens*, the predecessor to this strategy, was launched in November 2000. In the period since then, much has been done to put into effect the lines of action it announced, and much has been learnt about approaches that work in integration.

**4.2** In this section, we summarise the most important events over the lifetime of the *Full and Equal Citizens* strategy, concentrating in equal measure on practical initiatives and on research programmes that point the way to future developments. Again, these are set out under the three key themes: achieving full potential, contributing to communities, and accessing public services.

### **Achieving full potential**

**4.3** The NRIF employment sub-group has been active in working on policies that help refugees to achieve their full potential, engaging with the Department for Work and Pensions in shaping a preliminary report towards a refugee employment strategy, *Working to Rebuild Lives*.

**4.4** The Government has directly addressed many of the barriers to employment, including the commissioning of a skills audit and making changes to the Immigration Status Document, which, in the case of refugees, will clearly state that the holder is entitled to work. Guidance on legal working for employers is also being produced, and National Insurance numbers are now being issued to all asylum seekers who receive favourable decisions from the Home Office at the same time as they receive their asylum decision letter. The same change will be made as soon as possible in the case of asylum seekers who successfully appeal to a tribunal against an initial refusal. This will improve refugees' ability to seek and enter employment quickly after an asylum decision has been made.

**4.5** Language training is, of course, one of the keys to the integration of refugees into the world of work. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is a key strand of the Government's Skills for Life strategy, launched in 2001, and provision of language learning has more than doubled over the past three years.

**4.6** The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) within the Department for Education and Skills has also taken steps to improve the quality of language teaching to meet the needs of learners. A core ESOL curriculum, based on the national literacy standards, was developed in 2001, and over 6,000 current teachers have received training in using it. New nationally recognised qualifications for ESOL learners will be in place from September 2004, and a suite of new teaching and learning materials to support these qualifications has already been produced. In addition, ABSSU is supporting front-line staff in identifying those with language needs and referring them to appropriate training, with a new ESOL screening tool and initial assessment materials to be released in summer 2004.

**4.7** ESOL Pathfinder projects, which ran in ten English regions from September 2002 to December 2003, carried out action research into innovative ways of delivering this teaching and learning infrastructure in a range of contexts. They worked with around 10,000 learners, of whom at least half were refugees. Early evaluation shows that 96 per cent of learners interviewed felt that their English had improved significantly and 85 per cent were doing or planned to do further English training. The full evaluation, which included in-depth interviews with learners on courses and a follow-up interview six months later to look at the impact and outcomes of the learning, will be published in late summer 2004.

**4.8** The Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus have developed work-focused English-language support for refugees within Work Based Learning for Adults through full-time provision (leading to a qualification), alongside support in understanding the labour market, work experience and relevant vocational training. Jobcentre Plus is also piloting a programme to tackle the employment barriers faced by newly arrived refugees.

**4.9** More generally, a new European Community initiative, EQUAL, is promoting new ways to combat discrimination and inequalities in the labour market by establishing Development Partnerships in

London, Liverpool and Glasgow that help refugees with the transition to work. These projects aim to promote education by providing advice, language and cultural training and employment, including employer relations and recognition of the skills and qualifications of refugees. EQUAL also aims to promote capacity-building by influencing service providers and working with local communities.

**4.10** Other projects aim specifically to build on refugees' existing skills and experience to help them gain access to a particular area of employment. The Department of Health has taken steps to encourage refugees with health profession qualifications to continue their career in the NHS, and over the past three years has allocated £1.5 million to over 30 projects throughout England. These include:

- language teaching and communication courses;
- clinical skills courses to prepare refugee health professionals for the clinical competence exam;
- work shadowing and clinical attachment schemes; and
- mentoring and job clubs.

A further £500,000 has been made available to support refugee projects in 2004/05.

**4.11** The Department of Health has also supported the British Medical Association, in conjunction with the Refugee Council, in setting up a Refugee Doctors Database Project that currently lists over 950 doctors. Similar databases have since been established at the British Dental Association and Royal College of Nurses for refugee dentists and nurses. Many NHS Workforce Development Confederations and Strategic Health Authorities are now supporting Refugee Health Professionals Initiatives, helping qualified refugees to re-qualify by providing English classes, study and support groups, and financial help with travel and childcare.

**4.12** Much of this activity will be co-ordinated through a new career advice and support website for refugee health professionals ([www.harpweb.org.uk](http://www.harpweb.org.uk)) that is being developed by the North East London

Strategic Health Authority and funded by the Treasury's Invest to Save budget. Research by the Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal (HARP), through support from the Home Office, is also developing Pathways to Employment toolkits for use by employers, employment agencies and refugees.

**4.13** There are also many voluntary organisations providing valuable advice and guidance to refugees in the field of training and employment. Some provide specialist advice for refugees with professional qualifications. Examples include the following:

- Praxis has worked extensively with refugee nurses and interpreters, Refugees into Jobs helps doctors and teachers to use their skills in the UK, and the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit has worked with refugee teachers.
- The Refugee Council and the Sierra Leone Refugee Welfare Association provide open learning sessions to train unemployed refugees in English-language and IT skills.
- RIFCO (Refugee Integration for Career Opportunities) provides a pathway into employment for refugees by addressing their social, language and vocational needs through a co-ordinated programme of support.
- RETAS (the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service) assists refugees to get their existing qualifications recognised, and specifically targets resources towards refugee women to counter the social exclusion they face as one of the most under-represented groups in the labour market.

**4.14** Work has also been conducted with employers to encourage refugee integration in the job market. The Employability Forum meets regularly with employers to examine the issues and employment barriers that affect refugee jobseekers and formulate proposals. Recent research commissioned by the Institute for Employment Studies (*Employing Refugees: Some Organisations' Experiences*) highlights the need for clearer documentation of permission to work (which is being addressed by the changes to the Immigration Status Document, as mentioned earlier).

**4.15** Within the private sector, major companies have recognised the importance of including refugees within the scope of their diversity programmes. *Personnel Today*, with a circulation of more than 50,000 human resource managers, has also run a positive and effective campaign to promote the employment of refugees and to stimulate debate about the wider issues of skills shortages and migration.

#### The research base on achieving full potential

**4.16** The Department for Work and Pensions has published a major research report: *Refugees' Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training* (December 2002). The aim of the research was to assess whether training and employment provision for refugees was adequate, appropriate and accessible. The research also aimed to: identify potential barriers to employment, education and training facing refugees; compare their employment needs and labour market experiences with ethnic minority counterparts; and assess their relative disadvantage. Its main findings included:

- 56 per cent of those who arrived in Britain aged 18 or over had a qualification on arrival, of whom 23 per cent had a degree or higher qualification;
- on arrival in Britain, self-reported English-language skills were generally poor: just 17 per cent spoke English fluently or fairly well;
- 65 per cent had studied English, of whom 23 per cent were studying English at the time of the survey, but not everyone with language needs had accessed a course;
- terms and conditions of employment for refugees were poor, and notably worse than those experienced by ethnic minorities generally: 11 per cent of refugees were earning less than the National Minimum Wage; and
- those looking for work at the time of the survey had low levels of knowledge about statutory provision: just 54 per cent of those looking for work had used the Jobcentre.

**4.17** The Immigration, Research and Statistics Section of the Home Office has carried out a skills audit of refugees. This is the largest ever skills audit of refugees undertaken in the UK. The results focus on four main skill or qualification indicators: qualifications and education; economic status prior to departure for the UK; occupation; and language. They show the diversity of such skills and experience among refugees, and how these vary among people from different countries and between the sexes.

**4.18** Last year the Home Office published *English Language Training for Refugees in London and the Regions*, which assessed the availability and quality of ESOL to refugees around the country. Its key findings were that:

- the main barrier for refugees wanting to access ESOL is the shortage of classes and long waiting lists across London and the regions;
- recruitment and training of ESOL teachers is a priority;
- there is a lack of English-language teaching for professional or vocational development;
- women could be offered classes at more 'child-friendly' times; and
- co-ordination between ESOL providers and RCOs is crucial for sharing information and expertise.

### **Contributing to communities**

#### Community safety

**4.19** Since the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999, many far-reaching changes have been made to the way in which racist incident cases are handled. A new definition of a racist incident has been adopted by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and other criminal justice agencies, and monitoring has been carried out by the Crown Prosecution Service<sup>1</sup> on prosecution decisions and outcomes in all cases reported to the police or the Crown Prosecution Service as racist incidents.

<sup>1</sup> *Racist Incident Monitoring Report 2002–2003*, which covers the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003.

**4.20** Much effort has also gone into the development of evidence-based approaches to the reporting and recording of racist incidents affecting refugees and asylum seekers, and we now have a number of examples of good practice. Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment (ARCH), for example, embodies a multi-agency approach to recording incidents and sharing information, and has created a racist incident reporting process that will become common across all core agencies. ARCH is also developing a database to help identify tension points and inform intelligence-led responses to racist attacks.

**4.21** Further examples of good practice can be found in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, where hate incident reporting centres have been established, and police attend the regular drop-in centres and visit local reception centres to build up trust and pass information on to asylum seekers.

**4.22** More generally, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has published a guide to identifying and combating hate crime called *Breaking the Power of Fear and Hate*. This guide draws together lessons learnt from previous investigations and provides practical advice for front-line officers on how to deal with this form of crime.

**4.23** ACPO has also produced an *Operational Guide for the Management of Inter-ethnic Conflict*. One of its key elements is the recognition that many communities exist side by side and that the police must identify their differing needs and maximise their ability to understand, communicate and interact with them. This document aims to encourage the formation of strong links between the police and minority communities, affirming the importance of building up community intelligence and providing a platform for two-way communication between the police and the community.

**4.24** Guidance on tackling racist anti-social behaviour was issued in June 2001 to crime reduction partnerships, and a *Racist Crime and Harassment Toolkit* has been published on the Home Office Crime Reduction website, offering further advice to practitioners on the handling of racist incidents.

**4.25** The Lawrence Steering Group is also reviewing procedures for the handling of racist incidents to ensure that they meet the needs of victims, encourage reporting and promote community cohesion. The group has also developed a Community Involvement Strategy to communicate its work to minority ethnic communities and to get their input into policy formulation.

#### Promoting positive images of refugees

**4.26** Work is also being carried out on ways of balancing the widespread negative perception of refugees. The NRIF has produced media toolkits on a number of topical issues relating to asylum seekers and refugees. These include myth-busting information packs setting out some of the key facts.

**4.27** There have also been similar regional initiatives, such as the information sheets produced by the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. They were disseminated to the consortia working with asylum seekers and refugees across the UK and offered effective guidance for media-handling and enquiries from the public.

**4.28** A series of regional media briefings has been organised by the Refugee Council and Media Wise, an organisation run by journalists to promote media ethics. This Home Office CF project explores issues surrounding the portrayal of refugees with representatives from the local media, to ensure better mutual understanding of the complexities of the asylum situation. These events have proved to be excellent opportunities for journalists and refugee organisations to set up channels of communication for the future. They were evaluated with a NRIF Positive Images sub-group grant by the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) in the UK at King's College London in its report *The Challenge of Reporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. Media Wise also assists exiled journalists to find employment in the UK and has an online rebuttal scheme to challenge inaccurate press coverage.

**4.29** Refugee Week has in recent years established itself as a successful and widely praised way of bringing both the needs and achievements of refugees to a wide audience. Hundreds of events take place around the country, from football tournaments to parties and cultural events, organised by regional co-ordinating committees. RCOs are increasingly involved, and support in the wider community is growing every year.

#### Community links

**4.30** We have already emphasised the pivotal role played by RCOs in encouraging refugees to engage actively with their communities and in helping communities themselves to benefit from the diversity of activities that take place locally. They offer a very wide range of services, with many able to provide information and advice on housing, benefits, immigration policy, legal matters, education, training, employment, health and other services and entitlements. Some RCOs arrange social and recreational opportunities for refugees, providing them with reading materials and internet access, or organising cultural and faith activities. The Ethiopian Community Centre in the UK, for example, runs a radio programme in Amharic. Others offer advocacy, interpretation and translation services, peer education and orientation to life in Britain, as well as help with accommodation and material assistance.

**4.31** The RCOs Development Project, which is run by Praxis, aims to facilitate the full participation of RCOs in the process of reception and settlement of new communities through information and skills exchange, and prepares practical toolkits to enhance and improve their community development work. It aims to build dialogue among emerging RCOs outside London by visiting the organisations and providing links for them through its website, located at the Praxis site. A conference in February 2004 brought together 35 RCOs to share their views on the refugee experience in the UK. This approach is complemented by local and regional capacity-building and community development work by national and regional organisations.

**4.32** The full range of RCO initiatives is extensive and many have had an immediate

and positive impact on the lives of the individuals they involve, both refugees and members of the existing community. Understanding of the role of RCOs has been promoted by local networks in London, the North East, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield. Support for these organisations is emerging through the Quality Assurance System for Refugee Organisations (which is available from the Refugee Council). This is a joint project with the National Refugee Integration Forum, whose members include regional and national voluntary organisations) and regular meetings with Community Legal Services and the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

#### The research base on contributing to communities

**4.33** In 2004, the Home Office undertook a small-scale project to identify good practice in ERF and CF projects. It highlighted the lessons we have learnt from projects that have been particularly effective, and will continue to be used as a learning resource and reference document, especially for new projects to refer to when they are setting out.

**4.34** The Home Office's Research and Statistics Directorate is also in the process of completing a literature review on *What Works in Improving the Community Relations of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Other Recent Migrants*.

**4.35** The North East Consortium for Asylum and Refugee Support (NECARS) commissioned Northumbria University to produce a study on *Reporting and Recording Racist Attacks against Asylum Seekers in the North East of England*, which was published in March 2004. The research was generated by concerns that racist incidents experienced by asylum seekers may not be reflected in the recorded incidents compiled by the various statutory and voluntary organisations. The report identified models of recording racist incidents and examples of good practice; for example, the value of reporting centres for racist incidents and 24-hour reporting.

**4.36** ICAR's report *Understanding the Stranger* emphasised the need for reliable information in creating understanding between local people and asylum seekers in cases where a significant number of asylum seekers are moved into an

area for the first time. Its findings have obvious relevance to the integration prospects of new refugees. It suggests that if local concerns are not listened to, and questions are not answered, then attitudes harden. Case studies show that informing and consulting with local people can fill the vacuum that may otherwise be exploited by irresponsible newspapers and extremist political parties.

### **Accessing public services**

#### **Accommodation**

**4.37** One of the most immediate challenges a refugee faces when moving from NASS support to mainstream services is finding suitable accommodation. Rent deposit guarantee schemes have now been established in several areas and have been successful in helping refugees gain access to private sector accommodation by providing rent or a written guarantee in advance to participating landlords. The Supporting People programme, which is administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, makes housing-related support services available to a range of groups with special needs, including refugees.

**4.38** Other steps have also been taken regionally towards easing arrangements for the move from asylum-seeker to refugee status: the North West Consortium (East) provides information and assistance for refugees on how to apply for housing and gain access to mainstream services. NASS is currently piloting projects in Derby and Leicester under which families are allowed to stay in their dispersal properties for up to 14 weeks after receiving a positive decision, until other suitable accommodation has been found.

**4.39** A number of other projects sponsored by the Home Office CF have helped refugees gain access to good quality housing. The British Red Cross has established a project to help refugees move to new accommodation in Manchester and Glasgow, and Refugee Lifeline has been carrying out 'housing brokerages' to supply accommodation to newly approved refugees, while monitoring the properties and carrying out repairs. A grant from the ERF has helped the Refugee Housing Association, which has particular expertise in working with particularly vulnerable refugees, such as young

people and survivors of torture, to provide housing support.

#### **Health**

**4.40** While routine access to healthcare for refugees is the responsibility of the local Primary Care Trust, there are a number of resources available to health practitioners on a national level. Notably, the HARP website ([www.harpweb.org.uk](http://www.harpweb.org.uk)), already mentioned as providing information on health, social and cultural issues and on immigration policy, also offers a standard appointment card, now being used internationally, which translates appointment information into 32 languages, and last year launched a specialist mental health website.

**4.41** There have also been several successful local initiatives addressing the health and social care needs of refugees. Personal Medical Services, for example, provides refugee clinics, longer GP consultations in order to allow refugees to communicate through an interpreter, multilingual counselling by therapists with refugee backgrounds, and staff training sessions on culture, mental health issues and refugee experiences.

**4.42** During their time in an induction centre, asylum applicants will have received a health assessment, details of which will be recorded in a hand-held record that they will keep with them, which will be especially useful for health professionals should they move or re-register with a doctor after having been recognised as a refugee.

**4.43** The Department of Health and the Refugee Council have also issued a resource pack to help local health and social care professionals working with asylum seekers and refugees. Details are available online at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

#### **Education**

**4.44** At a national level, the Department for Education and Skills provides a Vulnerable Children Grant, which is provided to LEAs to support a range of vulnerable children, including refugees.

**4.45** LEAs have developed a range of ways to address the specific needs of individual

refugee children through a multi-service approach. These include interpreting services and school uniform and transport grants. LEAs have also provided staff support by assigning specific officers for the education of unaccompanied children and using specialist professional staff to address children's psychological needs. Efforts have also been made to help refugee children gain access to early years provision and to promote lifelong learning for parents by ensuring that libraries, arts and leisure services meet the needs of refugee communities.

**4.46** Within schools, admission and induction policies have been examined to ensure that they provide a welcoming and safe environment. LEAs have funding through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant to provide English-language support to children who need it (whether or not they are refugees). All schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy, reporting all incidents to parents and governors who, in turn, report annually to the LEA. Schools have also worked to help refugees engage with their local communities by ensuring that refugee children have full access to youth clubs, leisure, after-school and holiday projects, and by securing a representative voice for parents and children through consultation forums.

**4.47** Websites too provide useful resources for teachers. Portsmouth LEA's [www.blss.portsmouth.sch.uk](http://www.blss.portsmouth.sch.uk) website provides general information and useful language tools for teachers of refugee and asylum seeker children. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority website also provides details of education styles and levels in different countries.

The research base on accessing public services

**4.48** A good deal of research work is already available to inform this aspect of the strategy. *Integration: Mapping the Field* (December 2002) is an important study by an Oxford University team on behalf of the Home Office, surveying the field of British research on immigrants and refugees and offering pointers to the work that still needs to be done.

**4.49** A follow-up report (*Integration: Mapping the Field Volume II* (June 2003)) recommended joint working and information-sharing across local agencies, strengthening the national framework, and promoting RCOs in order to improve access to public services.

**4.50** The provision of good quality interpreting services is fundamental to the ability of many refugees to use mainstream services. The Home Office has commissioned a research project (to be published later this year) to map the provision of interpreting and translation services in order to avoid duplication and learn from experiences across the public sector. The research addresses a range of problems relating to the provision of these services, particularly regarding cost effectiveness.

**4.51** Turning to education, the Department for Education and Skills has published *Aiming High: Guidance on Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children*, which offers guidance on providing a welcoming environment, meeting pupils' need to learn English, and liaison between schools, homes and the community. The Department for Education and Skills is also conducting a literature review with the Teacher Training Agency on *Supporting Diversity in the Classroom*, with a particular focus on strategies to raise the levels of attainment of minority ethnic pupils.

Chapter 5  
**DELIVERING NEW SOLUTIONS**

**5.1** This chapter sets out the three initiatives which, added to the existing programmes described in the last chapter, will transform our refugee integration programmes: the Sunrise programme; the Refugee Integration Loan; and encouraging those applying for citizenship to develop their knowledge of the English language and of life in the UK.

**5.2** The real business of integration begins when an asylum seeker is recognised as a refugee and receives indefinite leave to remain in the UK. There is good preparatory work which can be done in induction centres and, for those who will be located there, in accommodation centres, but it is only when asylum seekers ‘gain status’ that they can be sure that they have a future in the UK and can start to make plans accordingly.

### **The ‘local connection’**

**5.3** Those refugees who have previously been supported by NASS will normally be expected to stay and make their new lives in the areas in which they were dispersed, and they are provided with support to help them do this. They will be helped to find accommodation, which may be available in the private, social or voluntary sectors. For those who are most vulnerable, homelessness legislation can provide a safety net. On the basis of existing homelessness legislation, many new refugees have sought homelessness assistance in London and the South East, thus putting pressure on housing and other services there and to some extent defeating the purpose of the NASS dispersal programme. The Government is therefore seeking to legislate to create a ‘local connection’ for the purpose of the homelessness legislation when an asylum seeker is provided with accommodation by NASS in a specific area. This will mean that new refugees who seek homelessness assistance should apply for help to a local authority in their dispersal area. This will promote integration by helping local authorities, housing associations and other service providers plan ahead more effectively to meet the needs of new refugees in their areas.

### **The 28-day window**

**5.4** Once refugee status is granted, a critical period begins. For those refugees who have been supported by NASS, that support must end 28 days after the favourable decision (a time limit that is imposed by law). For most, this will mean that they need to seek new accommodation. For virtually all, it will mean that they must look for employment.

**5.5** It is clear, in other words, that this 28-day period is of great importance in ensuring that most new refugees make a successful transition to a settled life in the UK. The Government now intends to concentrate on this window as the critical period in its refugee integration strategy.

### **The Sunrise programme**

**5.6** Much excellent work has already been done to help refugees meet the new challenges they face immediately after gaining status. But provision of help is better focused in some dispersal areas than in others. In particular, it is not always clear precisely who is responsible for providing the support services needed by new refugees. The Government therefore intends to pilot a new approach to refugee integration – Sunrise. Under the Sunrise programme, the Government will invite bids from voluntary sector organisations to carry out intensive one-to-one work with new refugees during the critical 28-day window.

**5.7** Each refugee who chooses to take part in this programme will have a dedicated caseworker, and they will work together to create a Personal Integration Plan. Where the refugee’s English is not adequate, the caseworker will, of course, need the relevant linguistic skills or the help of someone who can interpret.

## **The Personal Integration Plan**

**5.8** The Personal Integration Plan will cover all key aspects of integration. These will include:

- entry into employment – usually by arranging and ensuring contact with Jobcentre Plus, which would also provide social security support where appropriate – but there will be other pathways for particular groups of refugees, especially the highly skilled;
- housing needs;
- contact with the public services (particularly health and education) where this has not already been made or where the refugee moves to another locality;
- English-language tuition where needed;
- opportunities for volunteering and for being mentored; and
- contacts with cultural or faith communities, if sought.

Following up the Personal Integration Plan

**5.9** While the 28-day period during which the plan will be drawn up is crucial, help will not simply be switched off at the end of it. The caseworker will be available to help with problems or crises for a year after the initial decision, and will in any case contact the refugee at intervals of three, six and 12 months to check on progress.

## **Refugee Integration Loans**

**5.10** Another important tool in assisting new refugees to establish themselves in the UK will be the new Refugee Integration Loan, should the refugee wish to take advantage of it. The Government is seeking the power in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Bill to make Refugee Integration Loans. These will be financed from the savings made by ending back-payments of Income Support to new refugees, the amount of which depended on the time each refugee had spent awaiting a decision and bore no relation to the needs of the individual.

**5.11** Refugee Integration Loans will be made available to all new refugees who wish to take them up. They will be interest-free and will be repaid to the Government through the processes already in place to collect Social Fund loans. In the Sunrise pilot areas, caseworkers will ensure that new refugees are aware of their eligibility for a loan and assist in preparing applications. It is intended that the loan will be spent on items and activities that facilitate integration.

**5.12** These uses might include:

- vocational training where provision is not available through Jobcentre Plus;
- a deposit for accommodation;
- buying essential items for the home; or
- the purchase of tools for a trade.

**5.13** The loan should be seen as an investment in the refugee's future. Used wisely, and, in relevant areas, supported by the Sunrise programme, it will enable the recipient to start contributing to Britain all the sooner.

## **Implementing the changes**

**5.14** The Government intends to pilot the new system in one region, and it will invite bids to run the programme in that region in the second half of the current year, 2004. Decisions on whether and how to roll out the programme to the rest of the country will be announced in the light of experience following the pilot.

## **Refugees into citizens**

**5.15** When an asylum seeker is recognised as a refugee, he or she is granted what is known as indefinite leave to remain in the UK. After a further fixed period (in most cases five years), the refugee may apply to become a British citizen. The Government believes strongly that the grant of British citizenship should not be seen as a legal formality, but as a positive event for celebration – and one which should in itself contribute to the integration of new arrivals into British society. It has already

established new citizenship ceremonies, where groups of new Britons (whether refugees or not) formally take on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in an atmosphere of national and civic pride. These ceremonies have proved popular and successful.

**5.16** But much more needs to be done to ensure that citizenship helps drive forward the integration of newcomers, including refugees, into British society. Part 1 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, as well as bringing in the new citizenship ceremonies, allows the Government to make regulations which would require new applicants for British citizenship to have sufficient knowledge of English or Welsh and of life in the UK. The Government set up an independent committee, the *Life in the UK* Advisory Group,

chaired by Professor Sir Bernard Crick, to consider how these new requirements could best be put into practice. The Advisory Group's report, *The New and the Old*, was published in September 2003 and was immediately welcomed by the Government.

**5.17** The Government has accepted the great majority of the report's recommendations. Among the most important is that there should be no single, unvarying standard of English that all new arrivals must achieve.

### **Detailed list of actions**

**5.18** We can now summarise the key actions by which this strategy will be taken forward. These are set out in the table on the following pages.

Chapter 5: Delivering new solutions

**INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

<b>What</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Sunrise: Personal Integration Plan and caseworker support.	The Home Office will develop a pilot in conjunction with the voluntary and community sector, with wider roll-out being dependent on the cost and success of the pilot approach.	2005
Introduce Refugee Integration Loans.	Implementation will follow the passage of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004.	2004
Ensure that funding mechanisms support the integration strategy.	The Home Office will ensure that its funding programmes support the aims of the strategy both by reducing bureaucracy in their administration and by the selection of successful bids. The Home Office will devise mechanisms to support access to the Invest to Save – Inclusive Communities Budget by local partnerships for which it is the sponsoring organisation.	Ongoing
Improve information provision to professionals working with refugees.	The Home Office Refugee Integration website will draw together good practice.	End 2004
<b>Achieving full potential</b> Improve provision of information and services to refugees seeking employment or training.	<p>Sunrise caseworkers will provide local and specific information, and will refer refugees to Jobcentre Plus where appropriate.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus will work with national and local partnerships to develop services and provision that meet the needs of refugee customers and local communities.</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus will issue an operational framework in 2004 to help those involved in service delivery to identify and address issues that may arise in supporting refugees, to ensure consistency of standards while responding to individual needs.</p> <p>The NRIF will support work to develop refugee-specific programmes for refugee professionals seeking to retrain.</p>	<p>2005 (pilot)</p> <p>2004/05</p>
Enable refugees to improve their jobseeking skills.	<p>Sunrise caseworkers or mentors will provide help with interviewing skills and producing CVs, or will refer to other organisations that provide relevant advice and guidance for refugee professionals.</p> <p>Consortia will be asked to ensure that their integration strategies include action to foster volunteering opportunities for refugees with local employers and volunteer bureaux, in a way that is consistent with Jobcentre Plus regulations.</p> <p>The Home Office will help develop the capacity of organisations to provide volunteering opportunities for refugees through the development of a volunteering strategy.</p>	<p>2005 (pilot)</p> <p>2004/05</p> <p>2004</p>

## Chapter 5: Delivering new solutions

### INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION

What	By whom	When
Provide refugees with suitable documentation to take up employment.	Sunrise caseworkers will help refugees ensure that they have copies of all necessary documentation and will provide advice about opening bank accounts, etc.	2005 (pilot)
	The Home Office will improve documentation received confirming settlement, and will ensure that Jobcentre Plus and other bodies are aware of the new format.	2004/05
	The Home Office will work to remove the barriers that the current documentation poses to opening bank accounts.	2004
Enable refugees to learn English to a level suitable for work.	Sunrise caseworkers will work with Jobcentre Plus where appropriate to identify and help with entry to suitable ESOL classes.	2005 (pilot)
<b>Contributing to communities</b> Strengthen refugee and community safety.	Sunrise caseworkers will provide information on reporting incidents to a third party, including social workers, voluntary workers or RCOs.	2005 (pilot)
	Consortia's integration strategies will consider the need for local solutions, particularly by ensuring that crime and disorder partnership strategies to reduce crime include the needs of new communities.	2004/05
	Regional strategies will address the need for local law enforcement agencies to encourage RCOs and religious centres to report incidents to the police, including by strengthening their links.	2004/05
	The NRIF will consider how the number of incidents could be mapped accurately.	2004
	The NRIF will work with Victim Support to help develop services suited to the needs of refugees.	
Encourage positive images of refugees.	Regional integration strategies will address the need to provide balanced and accurate information to communities and organisations working with refugees, especially about any impact on local services.	2004/05
	The Home Office will support projects, and develop a website, that will help the media and the public to understand why refugees have been driven from their homes to seek asylum and the contribution that refugees make to life in the UK, be it economic, social or cultural.	2004
	The NRIF will develop media toolkits on topical issues relating to refugees.	2004

Chapter 5: Delivering new solutions

**INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

<b>What</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Foster community development.	Sunrise caseworkers will help and encourage refugees to get to know their local area and will point up opportunities for civic involvement.	2005 (pilot)
	Regional strategies will identify ways to build links between refugee communities, local communities and relevant groups and initiatives.	2004/05
	The NRIF will identify the support needed to further develop the capacity of RCOs, especially with regard to making links to the wider community, and will recommend action to meet those needs.	2004
<b>Access to public services</b> Provide targeted and specific information on good practices.	Regional strategies will be informed by consultation with local refugee bodies.	2004/05
	The Home Office, with support from the NRIF, will develop online guides that bring together good practice examples and details of relevant projects.	2004
	The NRIF will provide advice on what good practice could be replicated.	2004/05
Improve information provision to refugees about accessing services.	Sunrise caseworkers will be responsible for ensuring that refugees are able to access the support they need, having prepared a Personal Integration Plan.	2005 (pilot)
	The NRIF will approve guidance material to be used by Sunrise caseworkers.	2004/05
	The <i>Life in the UK</i> Advisory Group is producing a booklet of practical use to those intending to settle permanently in the UK.	October 2004
Improve refugee access to appropriate accommodation.	Sunrise caseworkers will provide practical advice and support to refugees to meet their housing needs.	2005 (pilot)
	In providing information to refugees receiving positive decisions, the Home Office will make sure that the role of accommodation providers, one-stop shops and local housing authorities is clear in terms of their provision of advice and housing.	
	The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will make sure that the role of Supporting People in providing housing-related support to enable refugees to live independently in the community is understood by local authorities.	
	The Home Office will improve the provision of information of positive decisions by combining asylum decision letters with any NASS letter terminating support.	

Chapter 5: Delivering new solutions

**INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

<b>What</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
Optimise healthcare provision for refugees.	<p>Sunrise caseworkers will ensure that refugees and their families are registered with a doctor, if not already the case.</p> <p>The Department of Health and NASS will work together to provide Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities with the information to allow them to plan for the arrival of asylum seekers, so that healthcare services can be delivered and accessed in a seamless way.</p> <p>The Department of Health and the NRIF will continue to develop ideas to help local health service planners and health professionals access information resources and toolkits.</p>	2005 (pilot)
Secure high quality education for refugee children.	<p>Sunrise caseworkers will ensure that refugee children are registered in school and will seek to address any problematic issues.</p> <p>Regional strategies will encourage the implementation of guidance from the Department for Education and Skills to LEAs regarding planning for the provision of services specifically to meet refugee children's needs.</p> <p>The Department for Education and Skills and the Teacher Training Agency will work to ensure that all newly qualified teachers are equipped with the skills and support to teach refugee children, and will establish an in-service training programme for serving teachers.</p>	<p>2005 (pilot)</p> <p>2004/05</p>

Chapter 6  
**TAKING INTEGRATION FORWARD**

6.1 We have set out in this strategy:

- our vision for the fullest possible measure of integration for refugees in British society;
- the key fields in which progress needs to be made: ensuring refugees are able to achieve their full potential, contribute to their communities, and access the public services they need;
- the action that has already been taken for each of these areas and the state of the emerging evidence base;
- the roles of central government, regional consortia, local government, and the voluntary and private sector in achieving these objectives, and in particular the critical co-ordinating role of the NRIF; and
- the pilot for Sunrise, under which new refugees will be offered the help of a caseworker to develop a Personal Integration Plan and the chance to benefit from a Refugee Integration Loan.

#### Gauging success

6.2 Refugee integration, as the strategy shows, is a very complex process, and much work has been done, in Britain and within the European Union and Council of Europe, to attempt to capture its essence in a set of indicators that would enable success or failure to be measured. Perhaps the leading piece of work in this field is that published by Alistair Ager and Alison Strang of Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, produced for the Home Office's Research and Statistics Directorate. This study offers a framework for understanding refugee integration as a set of distinct but interrelated domains, each of which will have its own appropriate measurements. For each refugee integration initiative or project, it should be possible to select indicators that are appropriate to its aims from the substantial set offered by Ager and Strang.

6.3 But we also need a rather smaller set of high-level indicators if we are to appraise the success of the strategy in overall terms. The following small number of criteria, taken together, should provide us with a reasonably

comprehensive measure of our success, especially at local and regional levels.

6.4 In using the indicators approach, it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved. Given the serious challenges faced by members of the refugee community and the relative poverty in which they find themselves, it is unrealistic to aim for them to achieve outcomes against these indicators that match those of the broader UK population. Rather, through these indicators, the Government's focus will be on demonstrating **improvements** in the outcomes for refugees, so that the effectiveness of local projects and policy interventions to remove barriers to integration can be properly assessed, and in order that their circumstances can more closely match those of the communities in which they are living.

6.5 For achieving full potential, these indicators are:

- the employment and unemployment rates of refugees compared with those of the general population; and
- the proportion of refugees demonstrating English-language fluency within two years of receiving refugee status.

6.6 For contributing to the community, the indicators are:

- the number of refugees involved in voluntary work;
- the number of refugees, and their children, in touch with community organisations (including local groups and wider community life);
- the proportion of refugees taking up British citizenship once they are qualified to do so; and
- the proportion of refugees reporting racial, cultural or religious harassment.

6.7 And for support from public services, they are:

- the reported satisfaction of refugees with their housing, compared with the general population; and

- the educational success of children from refugee families.

**6.8** All these indicators are, in principle, capable of being measured, and between them they cover the main lines of action set out in this strategy. No numerical targets have been set at this stage, but the Government wishes to see a steady improvement in each of these indicators over the lifetime of the strategy.

**6.9** To measure progress, we need to improve further our systems for obtaining quantitative information about the progress being made by refugees in this country.

**6.10** The Government will provide regular reports on progress made against the objectives in this strategy. The first report will be published in 2005. The report will be drawn up in full consultation with the NRIF and will provide a candid assessment of both the successes that have been achieved and of any areas where more effort is required.

**6.11** The strategy will be underpinned by a longitudinal survey of refugees' and other migrants' integration in the UK, which is currently being developed by the Home Office's Research and Statistics Directorate. The survey will be the first of its kind in the UK and will follow a sample of refugees and other migrants over an initial three to four-year period to explore their personal experiences of integrating into UK life. The project will provide important new data on how refugees and other migrants fare in the many different ways covered by this strategy, enabling us for the first time to measure our success in taking forward the integration strategy.

**6.12** Britain is a diverse and vibrant society. Refugees have many problems and they need to be helped to overcome those problems, but the Government firmly believes that they should be regarded respectfully as new residents and new communities who are a resource and not a liability. This strategy aims to show the way.

Annex A  
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Annex B  
**ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

## Annex B: Abbreviations/acronyms

### **INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

ABSSU – Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit	NASS – National Asylum Support Service
ACPO – Association of Chief Police Officers	NECARS – North East Consortium for Asylum and Refugee Support
ARCH – Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment	NHS – National Health Service
CF – Challenge Fund	NRIF – National Refugee Integration Forum
ERF – European Refugee Fund	RCDF – Refugee Community Development Fund
ESOL – English for speakers of other languages	RCO – Refugee Community Organisation
HARP – Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal	RETAS – Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service
ICAR – Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees	RIFCO – Refugee Integration for Career Opportunities
IND – Immigration and Nationality Directorate	SRIF – Scottish Refugee Integration Forum
LEA – Local Education Authority	SUNRISE – Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services

Annex C

**THE NATIONAL REFUGEE INTEGRATION FORUM**

## Annex C: The National Refugee Integration Forum

### **INTEGRATION MATTERS: A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

The NRIF was established in 2000 by the refugee integration strategy, *Full and Equal Citizens*, and was set up to take forward its implementation. The NRIF meets in plenary session quarterly under the chairmanship of the Home Office Minister of State for Immigration.

#### **Remit of the NRIF**

The NRIF's primary task is to steer and monitor the whole integration process. It has:

- monitored the implementation by government departments, consortia and refugee agencies of the Home Office strategy as it currently stands;
- offered views and guidance to government departments, consortia and refugee agencies on how the strategy might be developed and improved over time;
- considered the development of national and regional strategies in the cluster areas where asylum seekers are dispersed;
- disseminated best practice from around the country;
- circulated information on known available resources to the members of the NRIF and considered how resources may best be utilised across different fields of work; and
- played a key role in promoting positive images of refugees as members of UK society.

#### **Membership**

The NRIF brings together representatives from government departments, the voluntary sector, consortia and other representative organisations. The NRIF is also committed to ensuring that refugees themselves are able to participate directly, and membership has, therefore, been extended to include representatives from refugee community organisations.

#### **Sub-groups**

The NRIF has nine sub-groups, which also meet quarterly. External stakeholders chair the sub-groups, which monitor the implementation of individual elements of the strategy, and advise on how they might best be developed, drawing on specialist knowledge of the areas concerned.

The sub-groups have also developed action plans of their own to enhance the work of the NRIF. The membership of sub-groups is wider than the forum itself, as each includes a wide group of people with more specialist knowledge.

The sub-groups cover:

- accommodation – currently chaired by the Refugee Housing Association;
- community safety – currently chaired by the Consortium for the North East;
- community development – currently co-chaired by the Refugee Council and Refugee Action;
- employment and training – currently chaired by the Employability Forum;
- education of children – currently chaired by Bedfordshire County Council;
- health and social care – currently chaired by the Consortium for the East of England;
- positive images – currently chaired by Leeds City Council;
- research – permanently chaired by the Home Office; and
- unaccompanied refugee children – currently chaired by Roselodge.

*In line with the Home Office's policy of openness, at the end of the consultation period copies of the responses we receive may be made publicly available. The information they contain may also be published in a summary of responses. If such a summary is published it will be made available on the Home Office website. If you do not consent to this, you must clearly request that your response be treated confidentially. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.*

*You should also be aware that there may be circumstances in which the Home Office will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

*The contact point to request copies of consultation responses is: Cilla Pegg at Immigration and Nationality, Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 3RR or to: [Priscilla.Pegg@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Priscilla.Pegg@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)*

*An administrative charge will be made to cover photocopying of the responses and postage costs.*

