Moving towards integration: the housing of asylum seekers and refugees in Britain

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Aims

The paper explores what local housing providers and community development workers feel are the prerequisites for successful housing integration.

Methodology

The paper draws on literature and semi-structured interviews with seven community development workers in Leeds [two], London [two], Liverpool, Manchester and Leicester, and information discussions with statutory housing providers.

Key issues

The paper discusses the induction process, ongoing support, ‘move-on’ support for new refugees, and the need to combat racist harassment. Housing is identified by the government as a key dimension for refugee integration, yet the evidence suggests that many asylum seekers and refugees experience housing deprivation and insecurity. There is a lack of certainty about the precise meaning of housing ‘integration’, what it can and should achieve, and how progress towards integration can be measured. The implementation of initiatives has been uneven and there are many obstacles to progress.

Conclusions

Despite good intentions and some localised successes, there are still many obstacles to refugee housing integration, which arise from multiple gaps in provision, choice and support.

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Refugees
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